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Uncovering the Gendered Sport Workplace: A Field Study in Men's Professional Sports

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Uncovering the Gendered Sport Workplace: A Field Study in Men's Professional Sports

A Dissertation Presented

by

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DEDICATION

To my father, Edward Conley, who is not here to read this but who would have been rooting for me every step of the way.

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ABSTRACT

UNCOVERING THE GENDERED SPORT WORKPLACE: A FIELD STUDY IN MEN'S PROFESSIONAL SPORTS

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Women working in sport management are underrepresented and face sexism and harassment. While previous research has explained such disproportions and discrimination through examining the behaviors of individual men and women, in this dissertation, I instead examined ways in which sport organizations are "gendered;" that is, how ideas and norms about gender are embedded into sport organizations' structures and social processes in ways that create and reproduce organizational inequalities. Taking a critical approach grounded in gendered organization theory, I conducted an ethnographic study inside the administrative offices of two men's professional sports teams. Data include 165 hours of field observations, 29 interviews with participants, and numerous artifacts collected from the field. My findings reveal that the structures of these two organizations are gendered, with men more likely to hold leadership roles as well as positions in departments of greater organizational value, such as sales. Additionally, social practices create further divisions between men and women in the workplace, which I examine in two chapters. In a chapter on dress codes, I discuss how men are empowered by organizational dress while women are challenged and judged by it, their

professionalism assessed by the clothing they wear. In a chapter on workplace rituals, I analyze two rituals that reward masculinity and informally exclude women (and some men), and contrast them with a third ritual that emphasizes femininity but faces ridicule from men in the organization. In the final chapter of my findings, I discuss how these structures and practices, in turn, influence staffing decisions: when the organizations downsize their staffs following the COVID-19 pandemic, women are disproportionately impacted by layoffs and furloughs due to multiple, gendered organizational hierarchies. This research furthers understandings of why women are underrepresented in sport organizations, through demonstrating how everyday work practices can advantage men and masculinities. It also contributes to the literature, which has previously highlighted barriers women face during hiring and promotion, through its findings that women face disadvantages during downsizing as well.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Substantial evidence shows that women are proportionally underrepresented in management and administrative positions within sport organizations (e.g., Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Lapchick, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c). For example, in the National Basketball Association (NBA), widely considered the leader in diversity hiring practices among men's professional sport leagues in the U.S., women hold a third of team management positions. At the leadership level, these proportions decline further, with 10.9% of team president or CEO positions filled by women (Lapchick, 2020c). Meanwhile, at least two men's professional leagues—Major League Baseball (MLB) and Major League Soccer (MLS)—have zero women in team president roles (Lapchick, 2020a; 2020b). Further, research has shown that women are less likely to hold positions considered to have influential decision-making power, regardless of their hierarchal level in sport organizations, and are more likely to hold positions in lower levels of sport (for instance, in Division III compared to Division I college athletics) (Whisenhant et al., 2002; Yiamouyiannis & Osborne, 2012).

At the same time, women in sport report workplaces rife with sexism and sexual harassment (Hindman & Walker, 2020; Wertheim & Luther, 2018). Yet even though such discrimination is common, it is largely ignored by the industry (Fink, 2016). In one such example, women sport managers faced more than a decade of sexual harassment perpetuated by multiple men, including the team president, in the administrative office of the Dallas Mavericks, a men's professional basketball team in the NBA. Women reporting harassment to supervisors and management did not lead to support, and in some

cases, led to intimidation, until an investigative report by the magazine *Sports Illustrated* made the women's stories public in 2018 (Wertheim & Luther, 2018). U.S. national media has continued to uncover high profile cases of sexism and sexual harassment in men's professional sports, including by staff at the Washington Football Team (NFL) as well as coaches and managers in MLB (Ghiroli & Strang, 2021; Hobson et al, 2020; Kimes & Passan, 2021).

Previous sport management research has explained such disparities and discrimination through reasons including stereotypical gender beliefs (e.g., Burton et al., 2011), work-life balance issues (e.g., Dixon & Bruening, 2007), self-limiting behaviors by women (e.g., Sartore & Cunningham, 2007), and homologous reproduction (e.g., Lovett & Lowry, 1994). While such research examines the conditions of individual women and men, feminist organizational scholars instead turn their attention to the functioning and practices of organizations as a way to understand gender imbalances and inequalities. This dissertation takes this 'gendered organization theory' tradition, by studying ongoing organizational practices and processes in order to assess how these may perpetuate gender inequity (Acker, 1990). The purpose of this research, therefore, is to contribute to both the gendered organization theory field and the sport management field through an in-depth, close-up examination of the everyday workings of the administrative workplaces of two men's professional sports teams, with a particular eye toward the ways in which 'gendering' may be occurring and potentially disadvantaging women as well as other minorities.

Previous research has revealed that sport organizations are indeed gendered, with men's sport and men's work privileged over that of women (Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Shaw

& Hoeber, 2003). Existing literature, however, has only scratched the surface of potential knowledge on this topic, as it is limited not only in the quantity of studies but also in the scope of its context. Sport is a nearly $70 billion industry in North America, driven primarily by men's professional sports (PwC Sports Outlook, 2018). Yet the existing research on gendered sport organizations focuses on governing boards for national sport programs (NGBs), college athletics, and local sport organizations—all of which administer both men's and women's sport programs. If the industry is dominated by men's professional sports, then an understanding of these types of settings is needed when considering how sport organizations are gendered. The inherently gendered context of a men's professional sport organization may reveal new insights into the gendered practices and processes in the sport industry.

In this study, I do just that, in an examination of the administrative offices of two men's professional sports teams, referred to in this study as the Ice and the Blades. Through participant observation, interviews, and artifacts, I uncover ways in which these organizations are 'gendered;' that is, how ideas and norms about gender are embedded into their structures and social practices in ways that create and reproduce organizational inequalities. My inquiry reveals that women are underrepresented in leadership positions and in certain departments with greater organizational value. Social practices, such as dress codes and workplace rituals, further the divisions between men and women in the workplace by privileging the performance of masculinities over femininities. The consequences of these inequalities become apparent when, midway through the study, both organizations downsize their administrative staffs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Women are disproportionately impacted by these downsizings, with gender

diversity decreasing at both organizations. I will discuss these findings in detail in the following chapters.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized as follows. In Chapter 2, I lay out my theoretical background through a review of both the management and sport management literature that informed my inquiry and which shaped my guiding research questions for the study. In Chapter 3, I explain my research procedures, which included the use of field observations, interviews, and document and artifact collection. I also discuss my positionality as a researcher and describe my data analysis methods.

Findings from the study are presented in Chapters 4 through 7. Chapter 4 provides a rich description of the two organizations, providing context for the following three chapters of the findings. I discuss similarities and differences between the two organizations, including their structural arrangements and workplace settings. I also identify and analyze gendered aspects of these structures and settings.

Chapter 5 explores dress codes as a gendered, socially constructed practice with an examination of how employees 'do gender' through dress and experience dress in different ways. Specifically, my findings reveal that gender differences exist not only in expectations of dress, but also in how work clothes make women and men feel. Women describe the challenges of dressing for their jobs, viewing dress expectations as burdensome and in conflict with their responsibilities, while men view dress expectations as in line with their job responsibilities and find empowerment in their clothing. In addition, women face judgment of their dress that affects evaluations of overall

professionalism and job performance. In one case, a manager cites complaints about a woman's dress as a reason she is let go from the organization.

In Chapter 6, I examine three examples of workplaces rituals and how the associated performances of masculinities or femininities of each includes or excludes certain people in the organizations. In two of the examples—a planking challenge and a golf putting competition—performance of athletic masculinity is rewarded. While no one is formally excluded from participating, women (and certain men) either choose not to participate or participate in ways that make clear they are different than men. In the third example—a workplace meeting to discuss a popular reality television show—performances of femininity are encouraged within the context of the (all-women) meeting but met with derision by those who do not attend. The men in the office, as well as one woman, not only intentionally disassociate themselves from the meeting but create their own counter-meeting to discuss sports.

Chapter 7 analyzes the downsizing decisions of the two organizations following the COVID-19 pandemic, in which women were disproportionately affected by layoffs and furloughs. Findings show that the organizations have multiple hierarchies—including those based on position, department, tenure, performance, and social relationships—that can be gendered in various ways. Managers evoke one or more of these hierarchies in the decisions to keep or lay off employees. When downsizing decisions are based on these gendered hierarchies, women's positions are more at risk. I also discuss differences between the two organizations, including how the more bureaucratic structure at one organization minimizes gender differences during downsizing.

Lastly, in Chapter 8, I conclude the dissertation by discussing ways in which my findings advance gendered organization theory within both the organization studies and sport management literatures. I discuss limitations of the study and offer directions for future research. Additionally, I consider the practical implications of this work and provide recommendations for sport organizations, aimed at reducing gender inequities and power imbalances in sport.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study is grounded in an understanding of both gender and organizations as socially constructed phenomenon, continuously produced (and reproduced) through social interactions and discourse. As such, I draw from three theoretical bodies of literature: gendered organization theory, which considers how gender is embedded into organizational structures and practices, 'doing gender,' which examines how gender is socially constructed, and gendered organizational discourse, which studies how language and other means of communication (re)produce meaning. In this chapter, I first explain how this gendered organization approach differs from other research on gender in organizations. Then, I review relevant literature from the three theoretical bodies, in both sport management and organization studies. I conclude the chapter by laying out the research questions that guided my inquiry based on this review.

Gender-in-Organizations versus Gendered Organizations

Literature on gender and organizations can be classified as taking one of two approaches: 'gender-in-organizations' and 'gendered organizations' (Calás et al., 2014), the latter of which I take up in this dissertation. Studies of 'gender-in-organizations' consider individuals within the context of the organization, typically without offering much analysis of the setting itself. Research in this mold takes an understanding of gender as either a social role or a status characteristic and situates analyses around problems that women face in organizations (Calás et al., 2014). Much of the sport management literature on gender is in this vein. For example, Burton et al. (2011) used role congruity theory to examine potential biases against women as candidates for

different positions in athletics administration. Such theorizing often offers a sense of "too bad for the women" (Kolb, 2009) by suggesting such conditions of gender are 'natural,' or "fix the women" (Ely & Meyerson, 2000, p. 105) by placing the responsibility for overcoming organizational barriers in the hands of women through adjusting their own behaviors and approaches (Kolb, 2009). While much 'gender-in-organization' literature examines individual-level cognitive processes, a smaller portion take a more organization-centric approach. This research better contends with solutions concerning gender inequality by considering the practices and decisions that create these conditions (Calás et al., 2014). In sport, research on homologous reproduction and the "old boys' club" (Lovett & Lowry, 1994) provides one such example. However, both the organization- and individual-centric 'gender in organizations' literature aim to generalize patterns that explain gender disparities in organizations, using gender as a category to be counted. Neither, Calás et al. (2014) argue, actually theorizes gender.

The second approach, 'gendering organizations,' accomplishes this by theorizing gender as social processes: gender is something that is constantly being 'done' through social interactions, rather than something that people 'have' (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Gender is "a social institution which is socially accomplished through gender relations" (Calás et al., 2014, p. 20). Organizations are similarly theorized as socially constructed, and are 'gendered' through their historical and societal context as well as the ongoing practices and processes within them (Acker, 1990). Thus, in the theoretical background for this dissertation, I consider this social construction in two inter-related ways: first, through theories of how organizations are gendered, and second, through an understanding of how gender is accomplished through social interactions. Then, I turn to

a complementary theoretical lens that can also provide insights on how the gendered nature of organizations is produced and sustained: gendered organizational discourse, which provides analysis of the ways in which texts produce, sustain, and contest gender inequalities in organizations.

Gendered Organization Theory

Organizations are constructed on the foundation of gendered documents and practices that maintain hegemonic masculinity and reinforce gender inequality at work (Acker, 1990). Yet, both in and outside of sport, many persist in viewing organizations as gender neutral (Acker, 1990; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012). Therefore, in this study, I seek to bring to light the ways in which men's professional sports organizations are gendered—even if those working inside them do not always recognize them as such—and understand the conditions that preceded such gendering.

While much management (and sport management) research treats organizations as gender neutral, a branch of management scholarship has developed over the last several decades that considers the importance of gender when studying organizations. Kanter (1977), for instance, brought attention to the role that structure (both hierarchical and social) plays on gender inequality at work, theorizing that women's disadvantage in organizations was due to their structural placement within them. Her work, based on a case study of a large corporation, provided an in-depth analysis of the roles played by men and women and how power and opportunity functioned inside an organization.

While Kanter (1977) is still influential today, much of the current literature draws from Acker's (1990) conceptualization of the gendered organization. Acker (1990) argued that Kanter's (1977) view of gender as separate from the organization was

incomplete, contending instead that organizations are themselves gendered, in that gender is embedded in the structures and social processes of organizations. She described five interacting processes through which organizations are gendered. The first involves the construction of divisions along gendered lines. Organizations may contain a wide range of such divisions. Men and women may hold different occupations, or their work may occur in physically separated spaces. Acceptable workplace behaviors may differ for men and women. Organizational power may also be divided differently between men and women. Additionally, forces outside of the organization—such as labor markets, families, and broader cultural norms—may also construct divisions of gender within the organization (Acker, 1990).

The second process involves the construction of images and symbols that interact with the first process by explaining, endorsing, or occasionally contesting the gendered divisions. These images and symbols may come from culture, ideology, media, language, dress, and more (Acker, 1990).

The third process involves interactions between people, through which dominance and subordination are enacted. These interactions take place between men and women, as well as between individuals of the same gender (Acker, 1990). Of particular relevance to the ways in which social interactions may produce gendered organizations is the understanding of how people 'do gender' (West & Zimmerman, 1987). This process will be addressed in more detail in the next section of the theoretical background.

A fourth process concerns the production of "gendered components of individual identity" (Acker, 1990, p. 147). According to Acker (1990), this identity is produced in

part through the first three processes, for example, by choosing gender-appropriate language and clothing and by interacting with others as a gendered employee.

Lastly, the fifth process involves the role of gender in the production and reproduction of social structures, including organizations. As with other aspects of social life, gender underlies the assumptions and practices on which organizations are built. Organizational logics, while traditionally theorized as gender-neutral, are thus in fact gendered. When these logics suggest that jobs (and the hierarchies within which they are contained) are gender neutral, they do not consider the humans who will occupy them: the worker who fills a job remains abstract. However, the "ideal" worker would be free of responsibilities outside of those required by the job. Such a person, Acker (1990) contends, describes a man (usually heterosexual and white), one with a wife at home to take care of his children and other personal needs. Since a job is therefore gendered, so too are the hierarchical structures of organizations. Positions with greater authority and responsibility suggest a stronger need to eliminate external commitments, making their ideal occupant more likely to be a man (Acker, 1990; 2006). For other jobs—such as those which require compliance and offer low pay—the ideal worker may actually be a woman (Acker, 2006; Salzinger; 2003).

Because these five processes are socially constructed, they are continually being produced, reproduced, and contested. However, enacting changes to existing gendered structures and processes requires much more effort than sustaining existing ones (Acker, 1990). For example, a study of an organizational initiative that emphasized valuing performance over office face time (the Results Only Work Environment, or ROWE) demonstrated that challenges to the ideal worker norm—even when instituted by

management—meet gendered responses. Despite the presentation of the initiative as gender neutral (that is, it mentioned neither gender equity nor work-family balance), reception varied between men and women. Women in their 30s and 40s, described by the authors as most likely to be mothers, were more enthusiastic about the initiative, while men were more likely to not see its value or feel that it would not align with their work responsibilities. These training sessions revealed gendered beliefs about responsibilities for both housework and childcare, with a man remarking that the initiative would not be as beneficial for him because he is not "allowed" to do the laundry. The study also uncovered for whom flexible work arrangements are available: non-salaried, administrative staff (mostly women) are required to be at work and available, even if their managers are not; while younger staff worry about the career mobility consequences of impressions that may form if they skip unnecessary meetings (Kelly et al., 2010). Such findings underscore, in particular, the ways in which divisions by gender, both at work and at home, impacted perceptions of the ideal worker at this organization.

Resulting from these gendering processes—as well as processes related to class, race, and sexuality—are inequality regimes, which sustain inequities in organizations (Acker, 2006). These regimes vary from organization to organization, and are influenced by historical and societal contexts as well as by factors inside the organization. Acker (2006) suggested several organization practices through which these are produced and maintained: 1) the organization of general work requirements (such as work schedules), 2) the organization of hierarchies (including job titles, descriptions, and duties), 3) wage setting and supervision, and 4) informal workplace interactions. The regimes may be more or less visible, and more or less legitimized, depending on the organizational setting

and the position of the observer (Acker, 2006). For example, when gender inequality is accepted as natural, as has been shown to be the case in some sport organizations (Hoeber, 2007), such inequality becomes legitimized.

Existing sport management literature on gendered organizations, while limited, reveals some of the ways in which the processes and practices identified by Acker (1990, 2006) manifest in sport organizations. For example, Hall, Cullen, & Slack (1989), in their examination of Canadian NGBs, found that the "gender structure of organizations, including sport organizations, is characterized by power relations (men over women, public over private, production over reproduction, heterosexuality over homosexuality)" (p. 41)—in other words, the structure is constructed through divisions along gender lines, one of the processes identified by Acker (1990). However, in their conclusions, the authors theorized that the structure of sport organizations is determined by the people in them; and if those with power are men, the structure will remain gendered. They predicted that should women attain more leadership positions, the structure of sport organizations would change (Hall, Cullen & Slack, 1989). Such reasoning is more in line with 'gender-in-organization' work, as it sees individuals as responsible for gender inequality. Thirty years later, we have seen increases in the number of women working in sport (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014), yet recent literature still reveals widespread gender inequality in these organizations—suggesting that changing the numbers alone is inadequate for understanding the gendered nature of sport organizations.

Yiamouyiannis and Osborne (2012) also considered divisions along lines of gender in their exploration of the underrepresentation of women in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) governance structure. Through an examination

of the gender diversity of specific positions and levels and the impact of NCAA diversity programs, their study found that as the importance of a position increases, gender diversity decreases. While other research has also examined gender diversity in sport organizations (e.g., Acosta & Carpenter, 2014), Yiamouyiannis and Osborne (2012) offered an explanation of the gender division of the workforce not just along lines of hierarchy but also along lines of power. They demonstrated that such division reinforces a power asymmetry between men and women in the industry and thus creates structural barriers for women. However, their study made this assessment by looking only at job titles and assessing power based on assumed influence of financial control by those positions (Yiamouyiannis & Osborne, 2012). Power and status function not just on a formal structural level, but on an informal, social level as well, which was not considered in this research.

Other studies reveal how gender relations in sport organizations are historically constructed, with gender inequality stretching back to the formation of organizations, some of which were founded more than a century ago. Shaw and Slack (2002), through case study examinations of three NGBs, contrasted gender relations in two older organizations (founded more than a century prior) to those in a more recently created NGB (founded in the 1980s). In doing so, they uncovered such inequalities were more deeply engrained and fiercely protected in the older NGBs, yet still persisted in the more modern sport organization, which was founded with a stated goal of gender equality. Specifically, they encountered resistance to gender equality initiatives and refusals to accept women as athletes. Under such conditions, women persist in being seen as inferior to men (Shaw & Slack, 2002). The findings from this research emphasize the ways in

which the processes of gendering in organizations are ongoing and can be challenged—though not always successfully so.

Demonstrating how inequality regimes (Acker, 2006) can be legitimized, Hoeber (2007) found that stated gender equality beliefs do not always match organizational reality. Through document analysis, observations, and interviews, she uncovered gaps between the meanings and practices of gender equity at a college athletic department, which had a professed commitment to gender diversity and equality yet failed to live up to that standard. Sport administrators, coaches, and athletes explained such gaps by denying that gender inequity was a problem or by pointing to gradual improvements. When gender inequity was acknowledged, it was rationalized as being unimportant or normal (Hoeber, 2007).

Shaw (2006) also furthered our understanding of how sport organizations are gendered by examining various social processes occurring within the boards of three NGBs. The processes she identified offer examples of three of Acker's (1990) interacting processes: gendered divisions, images and symbols, and social interactions. Gender-segregated informal networking—in the form of both old boys' clubs *and* old girls' clubs, contrary to most of the other literature on this topic—created exclusionary power structures within these sport organizations (though, importantly, the old girls' club held far less power). In addition, dress codes in the organizations emphasized differences between genders, as Shaw (2006) illustrated by describing the contrast visible in the portrait of the sole woman president that situated her as "other" to the men who had held that position. Finally, the NGB board members used humor to undermine conversations about gender equity, and to test women's willingness to take a joke. Such willingness

appeared necessary to develop or maintain credibility in the organization, therefore serving as a tool to suppress the voices of women who might want to protest. These socially constructed practices obscured the gendered nature of the sport organizations and served as an obstacle for overcoming gender inequality (Shaw, 2006).

Sibson (2010) also examined the interaction of two gendered organizational processes, gendered divisions and social interactions (Acker, 1990), in her work examining exclusionary power in a local sport organization that administered both men's and women's sport competitions. Based on field observations, interviews, and documents from secondary sources, her inquiry focused on the interactions of the board, which consisted of three directors each from the men's and women's associations. Her study revealed the ways in which the power of the board members was gendered: for example, the men each had an assigned formal title on the board while the women did not. In order to gain some power, the women had to challenge beliefs about 'the way it's always been done' and actively assert their ideas, often over the objections of the man in the chairperson role. One of the three women directors decided to resign her position during the course of the study, feeling that she was unable to contribute in a meaningful way, as two of the men directors made decisions on their own without considering input from the rest of the group (Sibson, 2010).

While these studies offer important insights into the way sport organizations can be gendered, additional inquiry is needed, particularly in the context of men's professional sport organizations. The studies above took place in the context of NGBs, college athletic departments, or local sport organizations, all of which administer both men's and women's sport programs. In contrast, a professional sport organization (in

particular those in the United States) are typically charged with administering one gendered sport team. This context may influence the social processes which take place in the organization, as well as contribute to potential legitimizations of gender inequality. In addition, NGBs and college athletic departments are situated within or closely affiliated with other institutions, such as universities or governments, and in some cases operate as non-profit organizations. This context may influence the gendering of the sport organization, such as by organizational and legal policy or funding. For example, U.S. college athletic departments are required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to ensure equal access to athletic opportunities to men and women. Because college athletic departments operate within institutions of higher learning, they are held to the federal law requirement that:

> No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (Office of Civil Rights, 2015).

In other cases, an organization may be required to meet certain gender-related requirements to receive public funding (Shaw & Penney, 2003). Professional sport organizations, on the other hand, are typically privately held, for-profit institutions. While they are subject to any federal, state, and local laws that apply to private businesses and citizens, they are not bound to any requirements tied to educational affiliation or public funding status. Lastly, the studies on NGBs and local sport organizations centered their analyses primarily (and sometimes completely) on volunteer boards of directors. While such situations still demonstrate gendered processes and practices, they differ greatly

from the context of a professional sport workplace, where people are working for pay and are located in a defined workspace together for 40 hours (or more) each week.

Based on these differences, I expected that the context of the present study would unveil new ways in which the administrative offices of men's professional sport teams are gendered compared to other sport organizations. With that in mind, I considered the following research questions during my inquiry: In what ways are men's professional sport organizations gendered, and how does such gendering explain inequalities in the organizations? The five processes of gendered organizations (Acker, 1990) and the four practices of inequality regimes (Acker, 2006), as described above, provided an outline of "where to look" for these answers as the study commenced.

'Doing Gender'

One of the processes of gendered organizations identified by Acker (1990) was interactions between men and women, as well as between people of the same gender. While Acker notes studying such interactions can reveal ways in which women and men act differently at work, considering a specific gendering process that occurs through these interactions—'doing gender' (West & Zimmerman, 1987)—offers a window into the social construction of gender at sport organizations.

Rather than a passive, dichotomous category, gender has been theorized as something that is 'done'—that is, gender is socially accomplished through ongoing interactions with other people. Individuals are encouraged by society to 'do gender' in nearly every aspect of life, through their dress, appearance, hairstyle, mannerisms, and so forth (West & Zimmerman, 1987). So embedded are gender roles in society and at work that practices of gender often occur nonreflexively (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008;

Martin, 2003)—though for some people, and in some situations, decisions about how to 'do' gender are very much conscious. Transgender individuals, for example, may deliberately manage their interactions at work in order to conform with gender expectations (Connell, 2009). Additionally, gender interacts with race and class in what West and Fenstermaker (1995) term 'doing difference.' Through social interaction, people distinguish themselves on gender, racial, and class lines, based on historically and societally-situated meanings of normative behavior for such categorizations (Fenstermaker & West, 2002; West & Fenstermaker, 1995). For example, for some women in the temporary, low-paying, and feminized job of clerical work, 'doing gender' means portraying a highly sexualized version of femininity meant to appeal to the men that they work for. To 'do gender' in this context, Black women must conform to white standards of physical attractiveness, while men must be either 'not masculine' or 'not heterosexual' (Rogers & Henson, 1997). It is the social construction of these differences, Fenstermaker and West (2002) suggest, to which "patriarchy, racism, and class oppression" respond (p. 207). Thus, through a study of 'doing gender' (and race and class), we can gain an understanding of power and inequalities in organizations.

One study that advanced our current understanding of 'doing gender' at work is Martin (2003). Through the examination of three stories of gender relations in organizations, Martin (2003) explained her meaning of practice and distinguished between gender practices and practicing gender. She described practice as systems of action, performed in social contexts, that are both institutionalized and dynamic. They are temporal, and once done, cannot be undone (though action may be taken to correct for the practice). Gender practices specifically are learned through repetition, beginning in

childhood in all aspects of society, and are often performed nonreflexively. For example, in one story examined, two vice presidents, one man and one woman, were speaking in the hallway when a telephone rang in a someone else's office. The man asked the woman to answer the phone, which she did while he returned to his own office. They both acted nonreflexively, conforming to known gendered practices. After she ended the call, the woman reflected on what had happened, and then disrupted gendered norms by confronting the man about why he had asked her to answer the phone. He was surprised by her reaction, but was prompted to discuss the matter with a number of other women in the organization, leading to changes in gendered practices, at least temporarily (Martin, 2003). Such a story demonstrates how 'doing gender' becomes part of the processes which produce and reproduce gendered organizations. Though the man and woman both held the same hierarchal status in their organization, by the nonreflexive gender practice of a man giving (and a woman accepting) an order to do an administrative task, gender inequalities were reinforced.

In the sport management literature, Claringbould and Knoppers (2008; 2012) have sought to extend Martin's theories of gender practices into the sport context. Through analysis of interviews with NGB board members, they examined how people made sense of the gender composition of the board, the gender appropriateness of the job, and the gender behavior of members. As used by the authors, 'doing gender' referred to instances when gender norms or stereotypes were conformed to, while 'undoing gender' occurred when those expectations were ignored, challenged, or changed (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008). Martin (2003), however, would likely take issue with the idea that gender can be "undone"—and notably, this study does seem to use the idea of "undoing"

very loosely, stating that women can undo gender simply by joining an NGB board or by introducing agendas to advance women's sports.

In another study, Claringbould and Knoppers (2012) also examined the ways that gender practices "sustain and challenge gender skewness at individual and institutional levels in sport organizations" (p. 406). Through an analysis of interviews with both NGB board members and sport journalists they identified three themes, which they labeled paradoxes, that contributed to the ways that gender is practiced in sport organizations. While study participants acknowledged the underrepresentation of women in sport, the study revealed that institutions and individuals have constructed meanings of gender that maintain or contribute to this skewedness by engaging in practices of gender neutrality (assuming men and women have equal opportunity), normalcy (accepting gender inequality as natural), and passivity (acting passively despite desiring gender equality). This offers a possible explanation as to why efforts to improve the gender ratio in sport organizations fail to produce significant change, and why producing such change is slow and difficult work, as these practices of gender are socially reproduced (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012).

Claringbould and Knoppers' (2008) conception of gender practices is mostly aligned with Martin (2003), in that they are performed nonreflexively with liminal awareness—which, the authors argue, gives the individual the ability to deny that they are acting in a gendered way, even if they are perceived as doing so by others. However, though the work of Claringbould and Knoppers (2008; 2012) labels itself as studying 'doing gender,' the findings reveal more about how people in sport organizations *talk* about gender, rather than how they *do* gender. To be sure, some examples of 'doing

gender' can be found, such as women who try to act like "one of the boys" (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012, p. 412), but the focus of both studies remains on how participants gave meaning to and made sense of gender skewedness in sport organizations. Additionally, the use of semi-structured interviewing, with questions in line with their research focus, may have contributed to a minimal understanding of how gender is 'done.' Claringbould and Knoppers (2012) themselves suggest more research into the social practices of gender in sport organizations is needed, and call for a "critical reflection on the social construction of these daily practices" (p. 414). The present study, with its use of both field observations and less structured interviews, seeks to fulfill that call.

'Doing gender' allows for further examination of not just one category of man and woman, but for understanding of the various ways that gender can be performed—and how such variations can work to create hierarchies, not just of men over women, but between men and between women. Such an understanding of the social construction of gender can be useful when examining organizations dominated by men. For example, Blomberg (2009) explains how in a financial firm, stockbrokers would practice masculinities to both decrease their own insecurity and increase their status in relation to other men—in this case, the stock analysts, who at times were the target of discourse which positioned them as lower in hierarchy than the back-office staff (comprised of mostly women). He also found that people perform different versions of themselves in different situations—not only may who they are at work be different than at who they are at home, but they may be different in particular situations at work. For instance, while there were instances in which 'extreme' masculinity was observed, the brokers also

performed less extreme versions of masculinity, in which they portrayed social bonding (Blomberg, 2009).

Similarly, Martin (2001) analyzed the ways in which gender was practiced during interactions between men. She deemed this "mobilizing masculinities"—when two or more men perform masculinities together (in other words, men "behaving like men" (p. 589)). Men conflate these mobilizing masculinities with the doing of work—but women view them as a waste of time; and feel trapped by such performances. Martin (2001) suggested too that men are perhaps able to conflate work and masculinities because of their power and legitimacy in organizations compared to women. In sport organizations, women have expressed similar feelings, complaining that they focused on work while the men socialized, yet the men were more often in line for promotions (Hindman & Walker, 2020). Other studies have demonstrated that men's career mobility benefits from the relationships and networks they build with other men (e.g., Mickey, 2019; Morgan & Martin, 2006; Williams et al., 2012). Uncovering the ways in which gender performances result from organizational status can connect 'doing gender' to 'gendering organizations,' and provide explanations for gender inequalities at work.

Martin's (2001) work was also important in finding that not all practices of masculinities in organizations are hegemonic—only four of the ten types of mobilizing masculinities she identified involved dominance and control. In addition, such dominance and control are not solely enacted over women, but over other men as well. The identified mobilizing masculinities fall into two categories. The first category, contesting masculinities, serve to differentiate themselves from others (both men and women) through gaining status, control, or some other benefit. Martin (2001) notes these types of

masculinities are both self-serving and exploitive. Contesting masculinities include "peacocking" (i.e., when men vie for attention over each other), self-promoting, dominating, and expropriating other's labor (e.g., benefiting from or taking credit for someone else's work, without either their knowledge or consent). Of these, the first two are used to assert their status over men, while the latter two are used primarily over women (Martin, 2001).

The second category, affiliative masculinities, are those in which men aligned themselves with others for the benefit of oneself and/or others. Such masculinities counter views that women, and not men, are concerned with interpersonal relations at work. Types include visiting (informal socializing at work), "sucking up" (acting deferential), protecting (preventing negative experiences or consequences), supporting, and deciding based on personal sentiments. While contesting masculinities are mobilized for an audience or either men or women, affiliative masculinities are performed for an audience of men—suggesting perhaps that women are seen as not having power or status worthy of affiliating with (Martin, 2001). As with Blomberg's (2009) work, these findings informed my dissertation research as I investigated workplaces in an industry traditionally dominated by men.

Blomberg (2009) also makes important observations about gender practices in organizations, writing, "Gender seems not only to matter, but is produced within the firm" (p. 220). It is local, in terms of time and place, but it is also everywhere: an interaction performed between two people can matter beyond that moment and location (Bloomberg, 2009). This insight underscores my reasoning for paying attention to the 'doing' of gender in professional sport organizations. Such social interaction may be

fleeting, but allows for an understanding of gender relations and hierarchies across the organization. Therefore, for this study, I considered the following research questions: How is gender "done" by men and women working in men's professional sport organizations, and in what ways does this produce and reproduce inequalities?

Gendered Organizational Discourses

In this study, I also consider how organizational discourses are gendered, and serve to create and reproduce gender inequities in men's professional sport organizations. Discourse has been defined as "language-in-use" (Gee, 2011, p. 8)—in other words, language is not static, but *does* something; it conveys meaning in the context in which it is used. Though definitions of discourse often include use of the phrase "language," it extends beyond the written and spoken word to include other ways through which we communicate, such as images, artifacts, and body language (Grant et al., 1998; Putnam & Cooren, 2004), hereby referred to as "texts." Analyzing discourse involves the consideration of units of text, as well as the social context in which they occur and the collections of texts which have influenced them and which they then influence (Fairclough, 1992). Within management studies, organizational discourse analysis focuses on these texts in the context of organizational settings (Phillips & Oswick, 2012), bringing attention to the ways in which such texts construct "organizational reality" (Hardy et al., 2005, p. 60). While discourse analysis is associated with a broad array of definitions and methodologies, for this study I consider a feminist critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach.

CDA considers texts as social practices, and is particularly interested in relationships of power and control (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 2001). It takes

as an inherent goal to expose societal issues (Gee, 2011). As Gee (2011) argues, language (or texts more broadly) is deeply political, in that it determines the distribution of "social goods…who gets what in terms of money, status, power, and acceptance on a variety of terms" (p. 7). Thus, CDA can aid in our understanding of organizations by considering how texts influence who has power, status, or even access. From the CDA perspective, the dominant group's power comes from its ability to control the way people act and think through discourse. This control may be enacted in overt ways, such as through laws and policies, as well as through less obvious, everyday actions. The dominated group "may more or less resist, accept, condone, comply with, or legitimate such power, and even find it 'natural'" (van Dijk, 2008, p. 88-89).

Depending on the chosen approach, organizational discourse can be analyzed at micro, meso, or macro levels, but CDA takes a multi-level approach (Phillips & Oswick, 2012). It bridges the gap between micro and macro levels of analysis, by connecting discourse (units of text) at the micro level to issues of power and inequality at the macro level (van Dijk, 2008). CDA considers discourse as being simultaneously embedded within 1) an immediate moment, 2) a broader organizational setting, and 3) society-at-large (Fairclough, 1995). For organizational CDA then, the context is of particular importance (Phillips & Oswich, 2012).

As CDA is interested in issues of power, feminist CDA takes a particular focus on the production and reproduction (and contestation) of gender power relations through a critique of discourse. In particular, feminist CDA examines how discourse sustains the prevailing gender ideology, in which men are privileged over women (Lazar, 2005). Such discourse is often taken for granted as "natural," thereby obscuring gender inequality

(Connell, 1995; Lazar, 2005). Because it is often invisible to people, the discursive nature of gender ideology serves to continuously reproduce hegemonic masculinity, maintaining existing power structures. Feminist CDA seeks to make the influence of such discourses known, by examining both the overt and nuanced meanings of text (Lazar, 2005).

Holmes (2005) provides an example of the use of feminist CDA in an organizational setting. Through an analysis of conversations that take place within a workplace, she examined how people "do power" in situations ranging from one-on-one discussions to small group meetings, between both supervisors and supervisees as well as colleagues in similar hierarchical positions, and between both men and women as well as individuals of the same gender. She found that gender was often "just below the surface" (p. 56) in these conversations, and that discourse sustained and produced understandings about appropriate behaviors for men and women. While women challenged behaviors normally accepted of them in the workplace, these challenges provoked acknowledgements of boundary pushing when engaging in stereotypically masculine behaviors. Meanwhile, men faced fewer restrictions, as their more 'feminine' behaviors were not questioned. The findings showed how prevailing gender ideology was contested, as well how such contestation can contribute to the evolving nature of discourse (Holmes, 2005).

Within sport management literature, analysis of gendered organizational discourse has focused on identifying discourses of masculinities and femininities in sport organization settings. Such discourses express assumptions about what it means to be a man or a woman (Connell, 1995; Alvesson & Billing, 1997), and can therefore underlie the structure of the organization, such as by establishing certain positions as meant for

men and others as meant for women. For example, in Shaw and Hoeber's (2003) examination of NGBs, they discovered that roles associated with masculine discourses are highly valued within the NGBs, while those associated with feminine discourses hold much lower value. These discourses served to cast men and women into certain expected roles in sport organizations. Even when particular positions have similar job descriptions (such as teacher and coach), the discourses surrounding them can communicate the value of the position to the NGB and the likelihood that the position will be filled by a man or a woman. The discourses can even change over time if a position becomes more valuable—as happened in one NGB when a team in a sport historically coached by women "teachers" won a gold medal and more men "coaches" subsequently began working in the sport (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003, p. 368).

Knoppers and Anthonissen (2008) also situated their analysis of what they term 'gendered managerial discourses' in the context of national sport governance, identifying meanings of gender, work, and sport from interviews with directors and managers (all of whom were men) of NGBs and government departments that oversee national sport in The Netherlands. They found that while men sometimes talk about their work in ways that appear gender neutral, such as being efficient, other discourses have more obvious gender undertones, such as those of toughness, perseverance, and time commitment, and may serve to exclude women from consideration for such positions. The authors also discussed how discourse expresses a belief that both a passion for, and a competitive background in, sport are necessary qualifications for their jobs, something that is stereotypically considered more common for men than women, as one participant expressed: "Men stand in line to do volunteer work in sport; you have to have a passion

for the sport and there are more men [than women] who have that" (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008, p. 100). They contended that the gendered subtexts of the discourses used by men work to establish women as "other," thereby excluding women from this type of work and maintaining men's dominance of these organizations (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008).

Other literature has focused specifically on discourses of masculinities. While situated in an analysis of athletes and coaches rather than employees and managers, Adams et al. (2010) offered a discourse analysis based on observations and informal interviews with a semi-professional soccer team. They noted the use of discourses establishing masculinities by both athletes and coaches, but also the use of discourses challenging masculinities by athletes. Specifically, they found that athletes challenged the aggressive masculinities of the coaches, usually through joking with each other, as a way to exclude the coaches. Despite this conclusion, however, the authors noted the complicity of the coaches in the formation of the athletes' masculinities (Adams et al., 2010). Though the present study is situated in the administrative office rather than the locker room, parallels to this study may exist, given the similarity of the power differentials of coach-athlete and manager-employee relationships.

Knoppers and Anthonissen (2005) made such a connection between managerial and athletic discourses. They theorized that several discourses of masculinities, including authoritarianism (domination through aggressive coercion), careerism (success through hierarchical advancement), paternalism (authority through protective justification), entrepreneurism (focus on an end goal), and informalism (male bonding), are similarly present in both sport and workplace settings, and suggested that such discourses may be

further studied to understand why more women do not hold senior management positions in organizations (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2005). This connection between managerial and athletic discourses furthered my interest in exploring the role of gender in men's professional sport organizations, when both organization and sport contexts apply.

The above studies demonstrate that gendered discourse exists in both organizations and sport settings alike. Whether by communicating acceptable workplace behavior for men and women (Holmes, 2005), underlying the meaning and value of various positions (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003), indicating who is qualified to work in a sport organization (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008), or establishing relationships between members of a team (Adams et al., 2010), discourse produces and reproduces, through acceptance and contestation, a gender hierarchy in organizations. Thus, in this study, I sought to uncover and critique gendered organizational discourses. Specifically, I considered the following research question: in what ways do gendered organizational discourses create and sustain gender inequity in the workplaces of men's professional sport teams?

Research Questions

Based on the preceding theoretical background, this study aimed to discover what we can learn about gendered organizations, 'doing gender,' and gendered organizational discourse through an examination of two men's professional sport organizations. As outlined above, the following questions guided this research:

1. a) In what ways are men's professional sport organizations gendered?

   b) How does such gendering explain inequalities in the organizations?

2. a) How is gender ‘done’ by men and women working in men’s professional sport organizations?

   b) In what ways does this produce and reproduce inequalities?

3. In what ways do gendered organizational discourses create and sustain gender inequity in the workplaces of men’s professional sport teams?

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

In this project, I took a feminist perspective, paying particular attention to the state of gender relations and the inequalities of power between men and women (Lazar, 2005). Epistemologically and ontologically, I view reality as socially produced and therefore study social interactions to understand its production. Such an analysis is oriented toward uncovering how the social world comes to be (Putnam, 1983). Through my analysis, I offer my accounting of this reality, but acknowledge that participants have their own accounts as well. Including these multiple accounts in my analysis furthers our understanding of the world (Harding, 1991). Additionally, I bring a critical perspective to my research, extending beyond the inclusion of multiple perspectives to an analysis of the "why" of social reality, by examining its social construction and the advantages such construction provides to certain interests (Deetz & Kersten, 1983).

Research Approach

The dissertation took a multiple case site approach and includes field observations, unstructured interviews, and collected documents and artifacts at two sites. These methods of data collection echo the work of Kanter (1977), Hoeber (2007), and Shaw and colleagues (Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002), and together allowed me to explore my guiding research questions.

Kanter (1977) called for more use of case studies of individual organizations in management research. While this study used two sites rather than one, the relatively smaller size of the included organizations (compared to the large corporation examined in Kanter's research) allowed for both the depth and breadth of understanding of both

organizations during the course of this study. The examination of a limited number of cases specifically allowed me to dive deeply into the organizations, to better uncover their structures and social processes while also considering their formation and development. In this way, my research took a similar approach to that of Shaw and colleagues, who situated their studies of gendered social processes and discourses in case studies of three NGBs (Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002).

Field observations allowed for an understanding of the everyday nature of work (Singh & Dickson, 2002). By entering the field as a participant observer, I was able to observe interactions and social processes in their natural setting, which enabled me to note practices of gender as well as capture organizational discourse. In addition, spending substantial time in the chosen organizations provided the opportunity for the close-up examination of structures and processes needed to understand the gendered nature of the organization. As West and Zimmerman (2009, p. 117, cf. West & Garcia, 1988) write, observations are "essential to reveal taken for granted aspects of how power and oppression operate in every-day life." Further, observations guided me toward topics of discussions for the interviews, and allowed me access to collecting documents and artifacts of the organizations.

Interviews focused on the experiences of participants complemented the observations, both by providing details that could not be observed and by allowing for the participants' interpretations of the setting. While an interview cannot reproduce realities of the past, it does offer "a construction—or reconstruction—of a reality" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 79), one that offers the point-of-view of the interviewee (Alvesson, 2011; Charmaz, 2014). Such interviews provided insights on the gendered nature of the

organization, as well as provided additional opportunity to analyze how participants "do gender" (West & Zimmerman, 2009). In addition, interviews provided another source of organizational discourse through the analysis of language used by participants.

Documents and artifacts both supplemented and complemented the observations and interviews, providing data to answer questions about structure, processes, and discourse. For instance, documents were used to review the hierarchy of the organizations and to examine written policies and procedures. They also provided further understanding of an observed social process, much as Shaw's (2006) inclusion of the wall of photographs of past presidents in her analysis of dress codes.

Research Setting

The dissertation took place within two men's professional sport organizations, referred to by the pseudonyms the Ice and the Blades. Study participants included the full-time administrative office employees as well as part-time interns and assistants working in the administrative offices (I identify all participants by pseudonyms). Access to the sites was obtained through communication with executives in each of the two offices. Both sites are men's minor league professional hockey teams located in the United States, which allowed for the examination of gendering in two similar types of organizations. An initial review of team histories and organizational hierarchies prior to the commencement of data collection revealed similarities and differences between the two sites, allowing the study to consider how contextual factors impact gendering processes and discourses (A more detailed description of the sites, based on observations and interviews, is presented in Chapter 4).

The Ice: The Ice are located in the downtown area of a city with a population of approximately 150,000 and at the start of the study had 19 full-time employees (14 men and five women) working in the administrative office. Two of the employees (a man and a woman) were Black, one woman was Asian American, and the rest of the staff was white. The team was approximately five years old during the study, though some of the staff had worked for a previous hockey franchise in the same city. The current organization is owned by a group of more than two dozen local business leaders. Of the 20 owners identified in local newspaper reports, all are men, and all but two are white (with the remaining two identified as of Asian descent). The administrative offices are located inside of the arena where the team plays.

The Blades: The Blades are located in a suburban area outside of a major U.S. city (population approximately 950,000) and had 22 full-time administrative employees (13 men and nine women) at the start of the study. All of the Blades' full-time employees were white. The organization was founded just over a decade prior to the study and had been owned by a white man, who also owns the team's major league affiliate, for about half that time. Prior to the current owner, the team was owned by three white men. The team's administrative offices are situated inside their arena.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Data collection included the following procedures, which were approved by the university's institutional review board. Fieldwork involved participant observation, primarily in the office setting at both organizations, but also at games and other work-related events (e.g., an off-site marketing event) and social events that occur within the context of work (e.g., a company happy hour or lunch with a group of colleagues).

Observations focused primarily on the individual behaviors and social interactions of the organization members, but also on the spaces in which they interact. I completed 165.75 hours of observations (85.5 hours at the Ice and 80.25 hours at the Blades) over a three-month period between December 2019 and March 2020, before observations were suspended due to restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. As a participant observer, my primary role was to observe; however, I engaged in conversation with research participants and assisted in some work-related tasks, as appropriate in the situation (Barley, 1990). Both organizations provided me with a cubicle from which I could observe the office. I occasionally switched to other cubicles in the office so that I could more closely observe different areas. I was invited, or would ask permission, to sit in on various meetings and to accompany workers as they worked on projects both on-site and off-site. I also wandered the office to chat with employees throughout the day. On game nights, I shadowed various individuals, rotating through departments to get a sense of a variety of work experiences. I kept detailed field notes based on my observations, periodically jotting notes throughout the day in either a notebook or on my phone and then typing up full notes after each day of observation (Emerson et al, 2011).

Following the suspension of field observations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I began scheduling phone interviews with participants to discuss their work experiences. Between March and July 2020, I conducted 29 interviews with 28 participants, all full-time administrative office employees (10 employees at the Ice and 18 at the Blades). Participants represented a range of departments and positions across the organization, including executive and entry-level employees. Nine of the participants were women and 19 were men. One of the participants was a Black man; all others were white. While the

intent was to interview as many of the study participants as possible, access became limited following downsizing at both organizations between March and May 2020. Interviews ranged from 30 to 100 minutes, with an average length of 70 minutes. Interviews were unstructured, with a list of topics focusing on work experiences used as a starting point for the conversations (see the interview guide in the Appendix). Related to these topics, I asked questions based on phenomena that emerged during the course of the study (Taylor et al., 2016). While gender often came up in the course of these conversations, I followed Martin (2001) in her approach to asking participants to talk about their work experiences, rather than priming them to consider gender, which may bring out defensive postures. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and sent to participants to check for accuracy.

In addition to the observations and interviews, I collected documents and other artifacts for analysis. Documents included news releases, social media posts, marketing materials, and meeting agendas that I encountered during the course of the study. Artifacts included photographs of more visual or physical aspects of the organization, such as a display in the office or arena or a video that played during a game.

Relationships & Ethical Concerns

I recognize that my own identity, as a white woman academic in my 30s who previously worked in the sport industry, shaped what I saw as well as how I was perceived during the course of this study. My prior experience working in the industry allowed me to orient myself quickly to the field—I did not need to spend too much time acclimating to the general flow of the workplace and was able to pick up on the "native language" (Emerson et al., 2011) of the organizations, which allowed me to focus in on

my research inquiry more readily. Additionally, my familiarity with the topic through my own research and reading of literature gave my observations direction and helped me know what to investigate further through interviews. However, such familiarity also begat the possibility that I might lose the "outsider" perspective, which could result in discounting things that seemed normal to me but might catch the attention of a true outsider. To guard against this, I maintained a deep curiosity during data collection by reminding myself to see the ordinary as unordinary. I also wrote memos reflecting on how my identity, past experiences, and knowledge were shaping my perceptions and interpretations of data.

As a participant observer, I presented myself to participants as a researcher who was looking to understand their work experiences. While I did not deliberately hide my interests in gender, I did not volunteer this information nor share that it was the ultimate focus of my inquiry. Communicating a focus on gender, especially early in fieldwork, might have primed participants to act a certain way, and may have also led them to focus on preconceived notions about gender at work or take defensive postures (Martin, 2001).

I strove to build trust and rapport with participants by interacting in a friendly manner (Taylor et al., 2016). To this aim, I shared my own background working in sports, but was mindful to use this information to establish a common ground, rather than to promote a view that I was there to provide professional advice from my own experience. My common background did aid my assimilation into the settings and facilitated relationship building, particularly with women, who would frequently share experiences with me that they perceived as common to women working in sport. I also built trust by offering my help when the situation called for it, including helping out with merchandise

sales during a busy game, assisting with a community event, and setting up marketing displays. I was also aware of the fact that I was a "known individual" to a few people at the teams (one at the Ice, six at the Blades) prior to the study. While ideally I would have entered the field without such prior connections to the participants, these connections were key to gaining access to the case sites. As the researcher, I remained aware of these pre-existing relationships to maintain consciousness about their influence on my observations. I also strove early on during my fieldwork to spend as much time as possible with participants who I did not know, so that my relationship with the known individuals were less of a focus for the unknown group. This was particularly important in regard to my prior relationships with the executives through whom I negotiated access at both sites. Other participants may have otherwise viewed me as conducting research for these executives, or been concerned that I might share my observations with them. To counter this, I communicated clearly that I would not report any information and tried to minimize my contact with the executives during early stages of observations.

Data Management and Analysis

Field notes, interview transcripts, documents, and photographs of artifacts were stored and analyzed using NVivo 12. Analysis was ongoing during data collection, and continued after I left the field. Analytical and reflective memos, including daily memos following each set of field notes, were used to capture emerging patterns, themes, and research questions and to pursue theoretical insights (Charmaz, 2014, Emerson et al., 2011; Schram, 2006). I closely read field notes, documents, artifacts, and interview transcripts multiple times and coded them using an open coding technique. A grounded approach to analyzing the data allowed for the discovery of new themes and research

questions, as well as those suggested by my a priori research questions (Emerson et al., 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). As I decided on themes for further analysis, I engaged in focused coding of the data and wrote integrative memos to make connections between separate pieces of data (Emerson et al., 2011). Prior sport management work on the gendered organization provides examples of the end result of such analyses, with the identification and discussion of several themes supported by multiple examples from the data (e.g., Shaw, 2006; Sibson, 2010; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012).

While data was coded to work toward identifying themes and social processes as described above, instances from the data were also pinpointed for specific analysis based on their "evocative" nature and exemplification of gender in the organization (Martin, 2001, p. 594, cf. Kondo, 1990). For example, as discussed previously, Martin (2003) included an analysis of a specific event (two vice presidents—a man and a woman— who are talking in a hallway when a phone rings in a nearby office, prompting the man to ask the woman to answer it). Another study offered a deconstruction and reconstruction of a few lines of speech from a conference, revealing the ways that the differences between man and woman and public and private change the meaning of the text (Martin, 1990). Outside of work on gendered organizations, Rosen (1985) offered a view of organizational symbols and power through analysis of a single company event. These pieces served as examples of how pivotal moments emerged in my own analysis, such as with the three workplace rituals discussed in Chapter 6.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

The research procedures described above allowed for the collection of rich data from multiple sources, adding to the trustworthiness of my findings. Given my analytical

standpoint and my analysis of social processes and discourse in their particular context, triangulation of the data would not be an appropriate standard to use (Atkinson & Coffey, 2003). Instead, I aimed for *crystallization*, making the data clear through the analysis and writing processes (Richardson, 2000; Shaw, 2006).

As a feminist researcher, I bring a political position to my research, and make no claims that my analysis is objective. Rather, I present the account of my interpretation of data, as well as the interpretations of my participants, which allows for multiple subjectivities (Harding, 1991). I did, however, practice reflexivity about the biases which I brought to the setting—as a white woman, as a feminist scholar, and as a person with previous experience working in the industry—by writing reflexive memos during data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2014; Lazar, 2005). I also maintained awareness of the influence of my presence on the participants whom I observe, which cannot be avoided during observational research (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2007).

Lastly, as a qualitative case study of two organizations, my findings are not generalizable to all sport organizations, as the social construction of gender and organizations is specific to the context in which it is studied (Dellinger, 2004; Feagin et al., 1991). Rather, my findings develop and extend theory about the gendered nature of sport organizations which can be useful for examining and understanding similar phenomena in other contexts.

CHAPTER 4

STRUCTURES AND SETTINGS

To understand how gender is embedded into the two sport organizations under study, in this chapter I offer an in-depth look at the structural arrangements and workplaces settings of the Ice and the Blades. Such an examination provides insights into how the workplaces are organized, as well as how they function on a day-to-day basis. In addition, I also explore the gendered aspects of these structures and settings. My analysis reveals similarities and differences between the two organizations and provides context for the analyses in the chapters that follow.

In this chapter, I first discuss the structural arrangements of the two organizations, including their ownership structures, organizational demography, hierarchical management, job assignments, and spatial organization. Then, I detail the workplace settings, describing the sights, sounds, and social interactions and behaviors present in the offices.

Structural Arrangements

From an outside perspective, the Ice and the Blades appear to be similarly structured organizations. They are both minor league hockey teams in the U.S. operating in the same professional league, and as such, have similar business functions (e.g., selling tickets and sponsorships, hosting hockey games, etc.). They are both relatively "young" organizations, with the Ice less than five years old and the Blades just over 10. They are similarly sized—19 full-time employees at the Ice and 22 at the Blades—with employees filling largely similar job roles in areas such as sales, marketing, merchandise, and public relations. Yet even a look at the staff directories available on their websites revealed

significant differences in organizational demography when it comes to gender: nearly three quarters of the staff at the Ice are men, compared to just under 60 percent at the Blades. A more thorough examination of the structures of these two organizations reveals additional ways that they are different, as well as ways that they similarly have gender embedded into their structures.

Ownership Structure

Both organizations are owned by men, though their ownership structures vary. The Ice, an organization that had been in operation for less than five years at the time of this study, is owned by a group comprised of more than two dozen local business leaders, all men. After the previous franchise in the city had relocated to another city, one local business owner—Rick, who owns a hotel and office building in the city—organized a group of other local business owners to purchase and relocate another franchise to the city. Carl, the president of the Ice, described Rick as the most involved with team operations, and that a group of five of the owners serves as an advisory board. Other owners they see less often but still like to give their opinions, according to Carl. Staff at the Ice described the local ownership structure as influencing their business practices. As Kurt, the Ice's director of corporate sales, said, the owners "are all local people, they're all people that grew up here…And I think they in turn steered us towards a more of a community involvement."

The Blades are owned by a white man, Gerald, who also owns the team's National Hockey League (NHL) affiliate as well as other business ventures. Unlike the Ice's owners, he does not live in the town where the Blades are located. He bought the team several years prior to the study from another ownership group, which was also

comprised of white men, who had owned the team since its founding. Not only is there more physical distance between the ownership and the organization at the Blades compared to the Ice, but the Blades' business operations are also overseen by their NHL affiliate, which is located another city. In particular, the president of the NHL team also serves as the president of the Blades, though he works in the NHL team's office and does not manage the Blades' day-to-day operations. Staff at the NHL team's office also oversee human resources for the Blades, in consultation with the Blades' chief revenue officer Daniel, the highest ranking individual who works in the Blades' offices. Whereas the staff at the Ice talked about their owners as assets to the team's operations, at the Blades, there was a bit more contempt, particularly related to their NHL affiliate's ownership. For example, Daniel and Gina, the team's marketing director, discussed how the management of the NHL team has "no idea" what goes on in their organization, after that team's vice president of human resources suggested that the Blades staff come to work in their offices during the season suspension that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Haley, the Blades' foundation director, referred to the time period after Gerald bought the team as both a "transition" and a "takeover," noting that the NHL team sent staff to work at the Blades' offices during this period. Haley also expressed frustration at this management-from-afar approach, particularly with human resources. She said, "…our HR is in [a different city], which is a blessing and a curse, I would say. It's really nice that they're not there, but also super frustrating that they're not there." She said she feels like nothing would happen when she would report issues such as workplace bullying. She also shared that staff from human resources infrequently visited the Blades' offices, and that whenever they did, it was usually because they were letting people go.

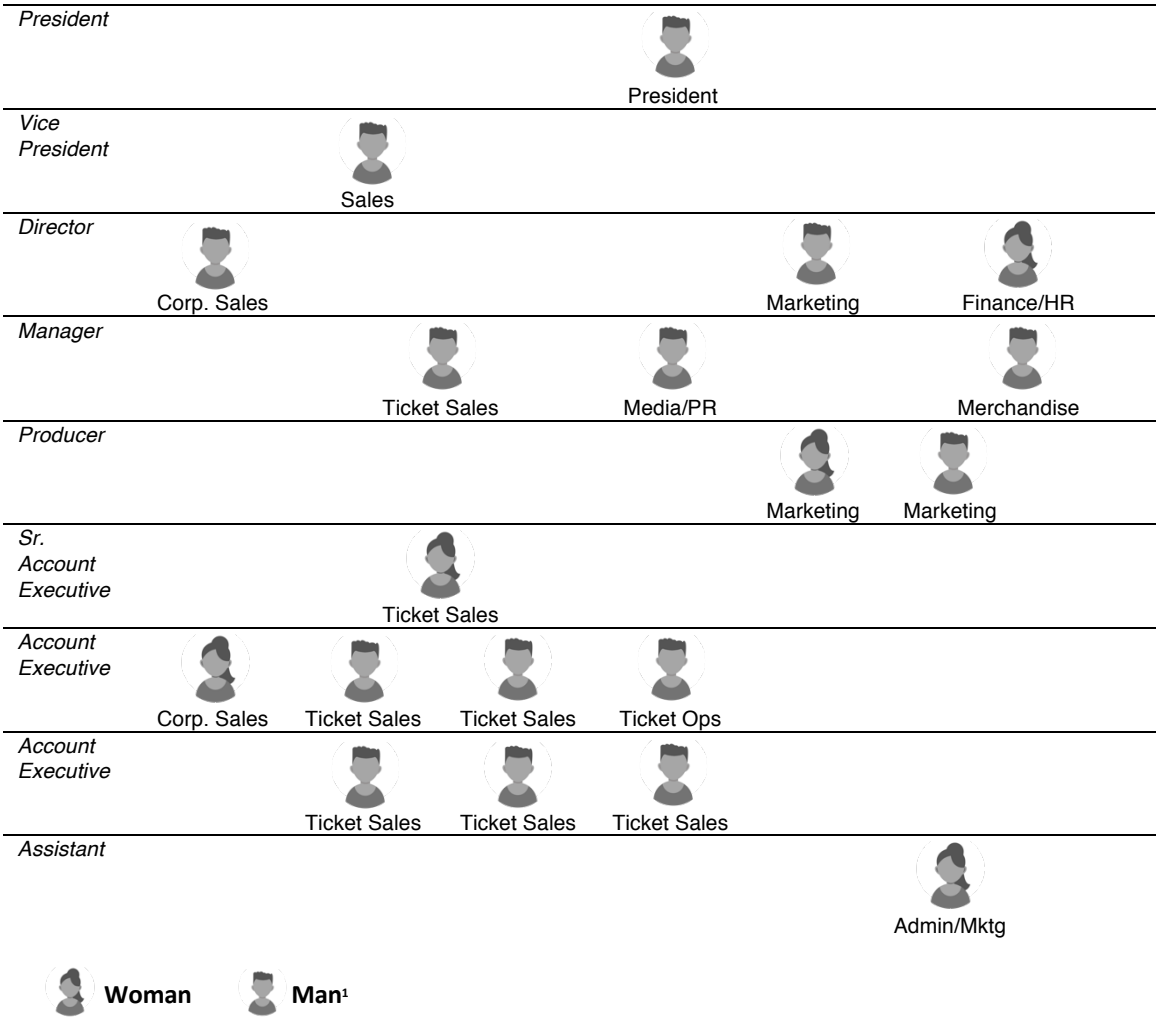
She said that because of this, one of her coworkers would start singing "The Imperial Death March," a song from the movie franchise *Star Wars*, when they would see human resources walking in the office.

Organizational Demography

As Acker (1990) wrote, "Although there are great variations in the patterns and extent of gender division, men are almost always in the highest positions of organizational power" (p. 146), and this is true of both organizations in this study (see Figure 1, Figure 2, and Table 1). While the Blades have a more gender-balanced staff (nine out of 22 staff members are women, or 40.9%, compared to five out of 19 or 26.32% at the Ice), the two highest levels of management at both organizations are held by men: president and vice president of sales at the Ice, and president and chief revenue officer at the Blades. At the Ice, only one woman—Hannah, the director of finance and human resources—has a role in the top four levels of the organizational positional hierarchy. All other women hold positions below the rank of manager. In contrast, exactly half of the men working for the Ice hold positions of manager or above. The Blades are closer to gender parity in director and management roles: women hold three of seven senior director or director positions, and half of the manager or assistant manager roles. At both the Ice and Blades, the assistant position, at the bottom of the positional hierarchy, is held by a woman. However, while the Blades have more women in leadership roles, decision making still often becomes the domain of men, particularly in crisis situations. For example, Annie, a corporate service coordinator, conveyed to me how decision making was happening regarding the organizational response to a medical emergency during a game: "Right now there's a bunch of old white guys in suits standing

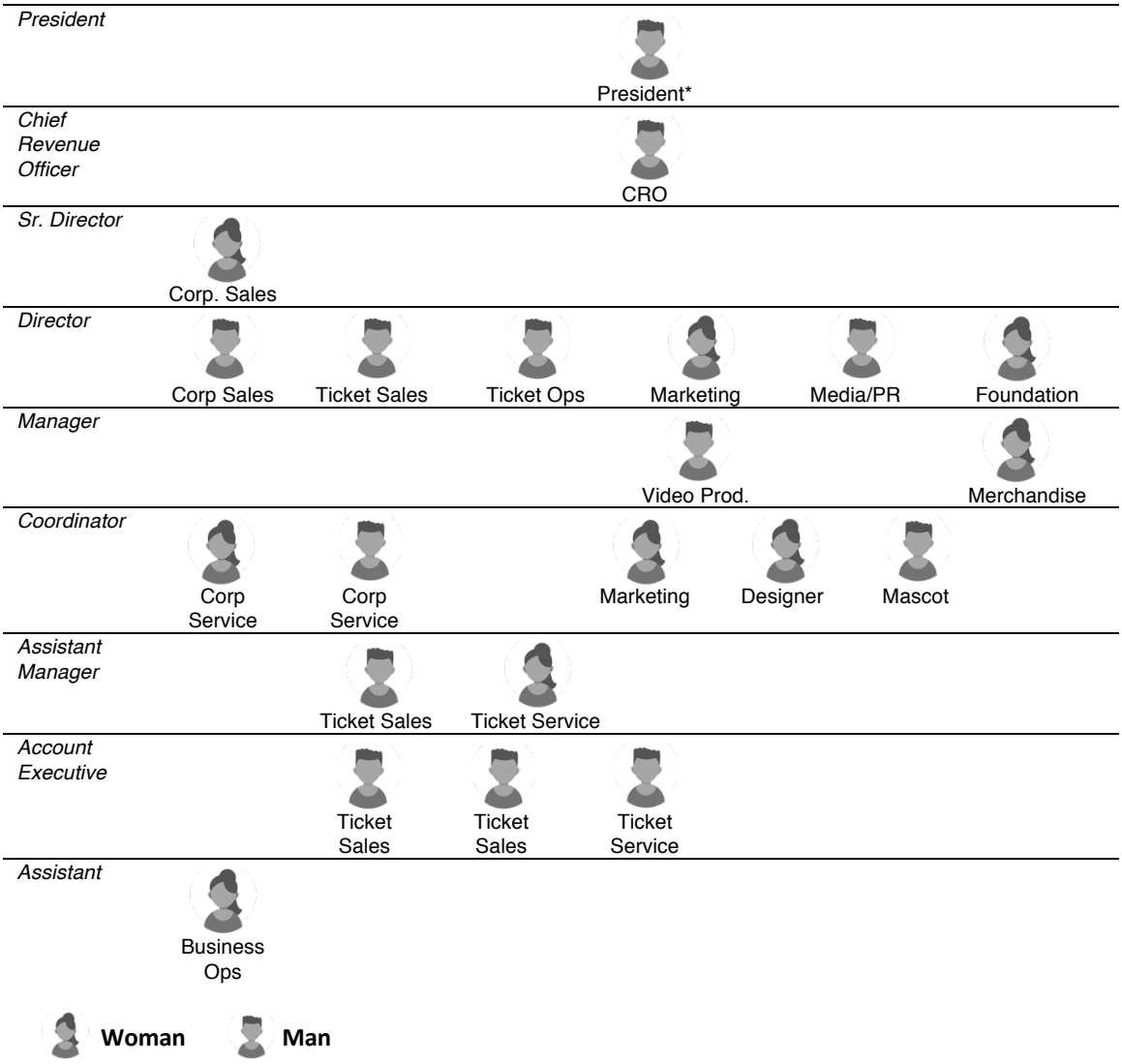
in a circle." She put her hands on her hips, widened her stance, and puffed out her chest to mimic them. Annie's description depicts a visualization of the 'old boys' club' in sport organizations, in which men hold powerful positions and exclude women through their network connections and informal relationships (Shaw, 2006).

Figure 1: The Ice Organizational Chart



[1] I chose the icons used in the figures depicting the organizational charts throughout this manuscript to visually communicate the structural location of men and women in these organizations. However, I also recognize that the icons themselves reflect and (re)produce particular meanings associated with the gender binary, a challenge that often plagues social constructionist accounts of gender (Wicks & Mills, 2000).

Figure 2: The Blades Organizational Chart



*Works in another city at the team's NHL affiliate, where he also holds the title of President.

Table 1: Number of Women by Positional Hierarchy

Hierarchical level	The Ice	The Blades
Executive	0 of 2 (0%)	0 of 2 (0%)
Senior Director/Director	1 of 3 (33.33%)	3 of 7 (42.86%)
Manager/Assistant Manager	0 of 3 (0%)	2 of 4 (50%)
Coordinator/Producer	1 of 2 (50%)	3 of 5 (60%)
Senior Account Executive/Account Executive	1 of 8 (12.5%)	0 of 3 (0%)
Assistant	1 of 1 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)

Gender segregation also exists within certain job functions and departments. Prior research has demonstrated that women and men are segregated into job roles associated with their gender (Bielby & Baron, 1986). At the Ice and Blades, sales roles, and in particular ticket sales roles, are dominated by men. At both organizations, ticket sales is the largest department, and management in the organization talks about its value to the organization. Carl, the president at the Ice, emphasized the organization's sales mindset and told me that while most of his staff is in sales (eight of the 19 employees in tickets sales, with three more in corporate sales), he would like to add two more ticket sales positions. Yet also at both organizations, only one woman works in ticket sales. At the Ice, Finley is the sole woman, though she holds a position of seniority as the department's "senior" account executive. At the Blades, Brittany is one of two assistant managers in the department, though her role focuses more on ticket service while her counterpart, Keith, focuses more on ticket sales. The Blades' director of ticket sales, Dave, acknowledged his awareness of the gender disparities in his department and mentioned plans to improve it with his next hire, noting he "would like to bring in a girl so Brittany is not surrounded" (though his use of "girl" to describe adult women infantizes them (Hindman & Walker, 2020; Miller & Swift, 1988)).

Table 2: Number of Women by Department*

Department	The Ice	The Blades
Sales	2 of 11 (18.18%)	3 of 11 (27.27%)
Ticket Sales	1 of 8 (12.5%)	1 of 7 (14.29%)
Corporate Sales	1 of 3 (33.33%)	2 of 4 (50%)
All Other Departments	3 of 7 (42.86%)	6 of 9 (66.67%)
Marketing/Creative	1 of 3 (33.33%)	3 of 5 (60%)
Public Relations	0 of 1 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)
Community Relations	N/A	1 of 1 (100%)
Merchandise	0 of 1 (0%)	1 of 1 (100%
Administration	2 of 2 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)

*President and Chief Revenue Officer are not included in this table, as they oversee all departments.

This gender segregation between sales and service is apparent in the corporate sales department as well. At the Ice, corporate sales includes the vice president, Mark, the director, Kurt, and the account executive, Tina. Not only is Tina, as the only woman, the lowest ranking member of the department, but she is responsible for both sales and service (or corporate activation). At the Blades, the corporate sales department is gender balanced, but women still have more responsibility in service. While the two corporate service coordinators are a man and a woman, the senior director of corporate sales (Marilyn, a woman) oversees the service coordinators as well as selling while the director (Bob, a man) focuses exclusively on sales. Additionally, Ted, the man who works in corporate service, shared that he is looking to move into either a corporate or ticket sales role, seeing that moving from service to sales is critical for his career advancement. His counterpart in corporate service, Annie, had a different view of her future career path, describing wanting to move into a management role within corporate service and eventually create her own path by establishing a strategy department for the organization.

This segregation between men in sales and women in service roles may be the result of socially constructed ideas about men and masculinities and women and

femininities. Women's value to organizations is often defined by feminine characteristics such as 'capacities for relationships, emotional aspects, linguistic aspects, propensity for care' (Morini, 2007, p. 42)—characteristics that align with a service-oriented position, where employees are responsible for cultivating relationships with clients and serving as a go-between for the client and other members of the organization. As Ridgeway and Correll (2004) wrote, "Men are viewed as more status worthy and competent overall and more competent at the things that 'count most' (e.g., instrumental rationality). Women are seen as less competent in general but "nicer" and better at communal tasks even though these tasks themselves are less valued" (p. 513, cf. Conway et al., 1996; Fiske et al., 2002).

Such gender segregation can be seen in other sport organizations, such as NCAA governance, where men are overrepresented on committees with greater organizational power, while women are overrepresented on committees that are labor-intensive or align with stereotypes of women as nurturers (Yiamouyiannis & Osborne, 2012). Specific to sales roles, the profession has been painted as rigorous and competitive, and therefore something for which men are better suited (Knights & Morgan, 1990). At the Ice in particular, the team president, Carl, mentioned intentionally hiring former college athletes for ticket sales positions, with the three most recent hires, all men, having played college football. Joseph and Anderson (2016) previously found that hiring managers in sport organizations associate desired employee traits with men's, but not women's, team sport participation. However, across industries, more women have entered the sales occupation, which has historically been dominated by men, and research has pointed to the feminization of sales, with an increased focus on relationship building, as advantageous

to women (Lane & Crane, 2002). Yet in these organizations, with the formal distinction between the sales and service tasks of the sales department, men hold the majority of sales roles.

Task segregation, such as the breakdown between sales and service, can lead to within-job gender inequality, as women perform less desirable and less valuable tasks more often than men, decreasing both their opportunities for promotion and their job satisfaction (Chan & Anteby, 2016). Ted, a corporate service coordinator at the Blades and one of two men working in a service-oriented position at either organization, appeared aware that a sales role would be more advantageous for his career advancement, as he discussed his desire to move to a new position. He said, "I'm either looking to move to another team, so I can move up in the corporate world, or move into tickets so I can get some more experience in another department. The ultimate goal right now is to be an executive one day…But right now that's the goal, so that's why I am considering moving to tickets or other departments, just get to more experience."

Hierarchical Management

While this look at the organizational chart of both organizations reveals the ways that gender segregation and inequality exist with this organizational structure, the approach to managing the positional hierarchy varies between the two organizations.

At the Ice, the positional hierarchy appears unclearly communicated and less formally managed. Carl, as the president of the Ice, described himself as serving as 'essentially the VP of marketing, of game ops…' as he manages multiple departments in the organization. Some people report partially to two managers, such as Rebecca, the administrative assistant, who is described as reporting to both Hannah, the director of

finance and human resources, and Peter, the director of marketing. In other instances, the chain of command seems unclear, as is the case with Liam and Willow, the team's marketing producers. While they both hold the formal title of "producer," Liam is under the impression that he is the manager—and apparently so is Willow. The following field notes excerpt recounts a conversation I had with Liam, approximately three months after he had joined the Ice:

> [Liam] says he is supposed to be managing the department but they [Willow and Kim, a woman interning in the department] don't listen. He complains of Willow thinking she is the manager but says "they're fresh out of school" while he has 20 years of experience...He says the position he applied for was video and social media manager but he told Carl he didn't want to do social media. He wanted to be creative director. He says Carl was supposed to explain that he was in charge of the department, but it didn't get communicated. He said Carl has made clear that it's his [Liam's] department. He tells me that he will ask Willow to do something and then a week later it won't be done.

Liam's frustrations with Willow's perceived insubordination are not only a matter of his greater work experience, but tie into his stereotypes about gender. The same night that he discussed the miscommunication of the management of the department, he complained to me and Lena, a social media intern with the Ice, about Willow and Kim not listening to him:

> [Liam] tells [Lena] that he is trying to get help with projects he wants to do, and says that the intern they have is disrespectful and is rude, that she works for Willow and won't do anything he asks her to. Lena asks, "Kim?" He confirms and continues: "She's disrespectful. I know how you girls can be." Lena points at herself in question. He tells her not her, but repeats that he knows how girls can "be all secretive and stuff."

Liam continues to call both Willow and Kim, both adult women though years younger than him, "girls" as he explains that it is not just his experience that should provide seniority over them, but the amount of money he makes as well:

> [Liam] says, “Carl was supposed to tell them that I was coming in to oversee stuff, and now there’s a hierarchical issue. You have a girl making a lot less than me and doing...”(he trails off).

In order for organizational hierarchies to function properly, they must make sense not only to managers but workers as well (Acker, 1990), and at the Ice, this confusion appears to lead to friction. However, in these exchanges, Liam appears to base his evaluation of Willow and Kim at least partly on their gender, though he is speaking to two women. In fact, during the conversation described in the last two excerpts, he is actually asking Anna if she would be interested in doing some additional work for him, since Willow and Kim are not, in his eyes, cooperating. Though their insubordination is, as he describes, a result of “how you girls can be,” which seems to include Lena (and even myself) in that group, he still is willing to offer Lena an opportunity.

At the Ice, staff members described feeling like everyone contributes to the ideas about what the organization will do, regardless of their position in the organizational hierarchy. For example, Martin, an account executive in ticket sales, described how the staff brainstorms promotional night ideas together: **“**So we all have a say in that, kinda putting some ideas together, you know what time of year would work best, you know what day of the week, you know what promos itself might be an interest, if there's any anniversaries come up for movies or songs or bands or what have you.” But when it comes to who makes the final decision, this happens higher up the organizational chart, though it’s not only the individual at the very top of the positional hierarchy. Mason, the ticket sales manager, described the influence he sees himself, the president, and the vice president of the organization having: **“**So with [Carl] and Mark and now with me, kinda call ourselves ‘the big three,’ but like the three of us really guide the organization and we

have a lot of fun doing it." Mason, in his role as the manager of the team's largest department, then appears to be more influential in making organizational decisions than the three people in director roles hierarchically above him.

In contrast, the positional hierarchy at the Blades seems clearly communicated and dictates a chain of command within the organization. Staff members described how most organizational decisions are made at the top by Daniel, and that information is communicated to them through the directors. As Edwin, a ticket sales account executive, stated: "Everything flows through Daniel." When the organization transitioned to remote work at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Daniel described how they managed work during this time: "[T]his was the org chart at work here, right?" Gina, the marketing director, said that she would get "marching orders" from Daniel that she would then relay to her staff.

The one department in which there seems to be some contesting of the positional hierarchy at the Blades is the corporate sales department. Annie, one of the two corporate service coordinators, described how the department's senior director, Marilyn, and director, Bob, have conflicting leadership styles. Despite the differences in their titles, both Marilyn and Bob report directly to Daniel. The two service coordinators, Annie and Ted, report to Marilyn, but their job duties require them to work on both Marilyn and Bob's corporate sales accounts, which is where the conflicts arise. When asked who prevails in these conflicts, Annie said it depends: "So if the problem, whatever incident, whatever the question is, is brought to Daniel, Bob wins. If it is not brought to Daniel, Marilyn wins. Every single time." Though Marilyn has the positional seniority as the

senior director in the department and is also Annie's and Ted's supervisor, the chief revenue officer sides with Bob on these disagreements.

Tension also exists between the two services coordinators in this department. While Annie only recently joined the organization a month before the start of the study, she had several years more industry experience than Ted. Three months into the job, Annie had started to take on more ownership of projects, which appeared to frustrate Ted. The following field notes excerpt exemplifies this relationship, as Annie returned to their work area after meeting with Daniel in his office:

> Ted asks Annie what Daniel said, and she tells him they need to go through all the contracts. "Here's what we're going to," she says, as she stands behind her chair. She explains that they need to go through the contracts, and make a list of all of the sponsors that have assets that are a certain number of times. She says that she is thinking that they each take two binders…Ted interrupts her.
> Ted: "Is this coming from him?"
> Annie: "Yes. (Hrmph) Would you…just listen please."

Ted's interjection, "Is this coming from him?" suggests that were it not, he would not be taking instructions from Annie.

Job Assignments and Duties

Another area of the organizational structures that appears gendered related is job assignments and duties. Specifically, many women in the organizations take on responsibilities that are not reflected in their job titles. At the Ice, Hannah, Tina, and Rebecca—and in some instances Finley—do more work than their job titles reflect. Not only is this extra work for them, much of the work they do is also gendered. Comparatively, two of the men at the office (Scott, the merchandise manager, and Sam, the media and public relations manager) have secondary job duties in branding and

community relations, respectively, reflected in their official job titles, even though these duties do not appear to be as central to their daily work as they are for the women.

Hannah, the highest positionally ranked woman at the Ice, is the director of finance and human resources. The team president, Carl, described her as someone who "takes the lead" in a number of areas. This includes serving as the director of the team's charitable foundation, but also includes some extra-role tasks in the office. For example, she described how the media and hockey scouts had wanted coffee service in the press box during games, but that it was determined that it was not "economical" to pay for the arena to provide this for so few people. Hannah said she asked whether they would be okay with a Keurig (a single-serve coffee machine) and they said they were. But, she said, now she is in charge of this coffee station. Before games, she wheels a cart with the coffee machine and supplies from her office to set up in the press box. In another example, I walked into the offices during a game night to see Hannah sewing a hockey jersey at her desk. She explained that she was stripping patches off a jersey, and made a joke about it being "Other duties as assigned." Such administrative work is exemplary of how "office housework" often falls to women (Williams & Dempsey, 2014), as these tasks are the work-equivalent of "wifely" duties (Kanter, 1977).

As mentioned previously, Tina is an account executive in corporate sales, with responsibilities on both the sales and activation side of the department. However, she also has taken on responsibility for many of the team's community initiatives. Her boss Mark, the vice president of sales, said, "Tina does so much for our organization from a fulfillment perspective and community perspective." She runs the team's kids' club, and I accompany her on a player appearance to a school for Reading Week. She coordinated a

toy drive before the holidays with a local non-profit and organized a "Sensory Awareness" game for the team. During the team's "community week," in which they send players out on multiple appearances to take advantage of a break in the game schedule, she described her duties in this excerpt from my fieldnotes:

> [Tina] tells me she has eight appearances with [the team mascot], and an all-day kids' club thing, but also appearances for anti-bullying and "parade of champions." She adds, "and go-karting and bartending." She says it's not too much for the players, but it's a lot for her.

Meanwhile, Rebecca holds the title of administrative assistant at the Ice, but spends a lot of her time working on projects for the marketing department. Hannah, the director of finance and human resources, described this marketing work as something that is for Rebecca's own benefit: "Otherwise, she would get pretty bored." Peter, the marketing director, described Rebecca as "eager to learn" and shared how she volunteered to help out with marketing projects after their former social media manager left for another job. During observations, I witnessed her independently working on graphics and overseeing multiple video projects. During one of these video shoots, Kurt, the director of corporate sales, walked into the room calling her "Rebecca Ford Coppola, Rebecca Scorsese"—a nod to the directing role she was assuming in these moments. Her game night responsibilities included editing video highlights to send to the media. Peter described how Rebecca's volunteered efforts will benefit her: "Her eagerness really, really put her in a position to help benefit her in her career if she wants to continue down this path. I'm sure it's a lot better than just an administrative assistant." Yet this work is uncredited in her job title. Women often have to prove themselves by showing they can do the work required of a promotion, while men are promoted on the basis of their manager's confidence in them (Ruderman et al., 1995). Peter's quote about marketing

work being “better” than “just” an administrative assistant, along with Hannah’s suggestion that Rebecca would be bored if she did not also do this marketing work, also diminish the value to the organization of an administrative assistant position—a position that is associated with women, femininity, and sometimes “unmasculine” men (Rogers & Henson, 1997, p. 223).

Finley, the Ice’s senior account executive, does mostly seem to stick to her job duties, as does Willow in the marketing department. But one example of Finley taking on extra-role labor occurs when she organizes the staff holiday card and gift for Carl, the team president. She coordinated collecting money from everyone, purchasing the gift, and passing around the card for signatures, again demonstrating the administrative work women take on beyond their job duties. These extra-role, or helping behaviors, performed by the women at the Ice may be reflective as gender socialization that encourages them to behave more altruistically at work then men (Kidder & Parks, 2001). However, research has demonstrated that women receive less credit for this extra work than men, and conversely, are judged more harshly than men when they do not engage in these behaviors (Heilman & Chen, 2005).

Such gendered job duties beyond assigned job descriptions are less apparent at the Blades. Penny restocks the office kitchen/supply room with office supplies, but this appears in line with her job role of business operations assistant. Marilyn describes having Annie spend her first few weeks on the job delivering holiday gifts to corporate sponsors, but notes that this is not really part of the job: “You have to do that part of the job, but I don’t hire anyone for the ability to curl ribbons.” One interaction between the

two assistant managers in ticket sales, Keith and Brittany, revealed how gendered tasks can slip into regular workday practices:

> Keith: "Brittany, are you thirsty?"
> Brittany: "No, because you're going to make me go get you something."

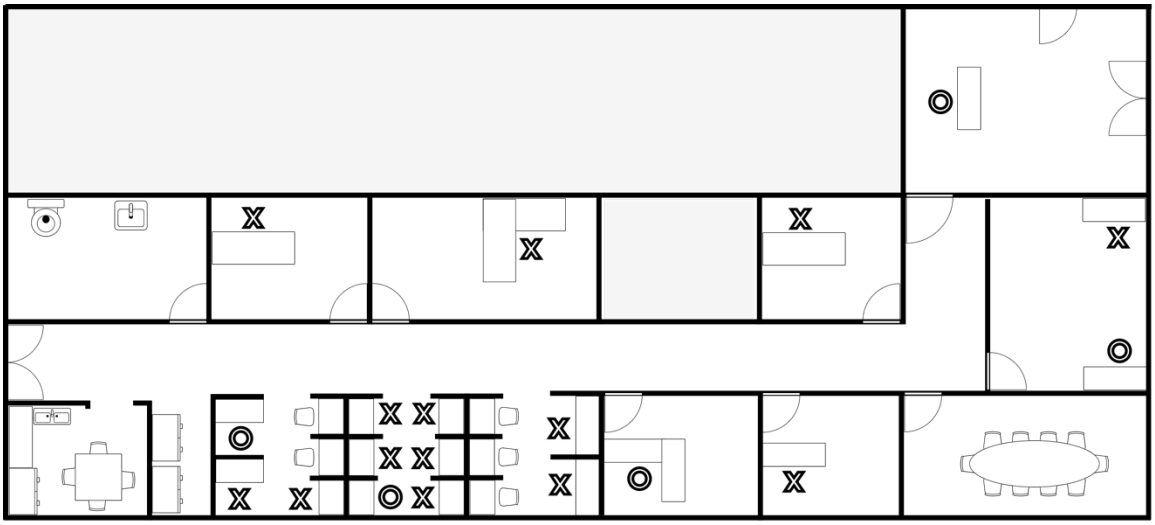
Brittany's response indicated a recognition on her part that Keith's inquiry was an attempt to persuade her to do a task—one that would take her away from her assigned work duties. This suggests a familiarity with this type of request. She shut it down—and Keith ended up leaving the office with Dave, the department director, to pick up refreshments themselves. But still, the request was made—by a man, of a woman who is positionally equal to him at work, to complete a task ('bring me a drink') that might be performed by a wife at home, or a secretary at work, without question (Martin, 2003). Brittany actively disrupted the traditional 'doing' of gender through her resistance of complying with this request.

Spatial Arrangement

Another way that divisions of gender can be created is spatially (Acker, 1990), and the offices of both the Ice and the Blades are structured in ways that create physical segregation along gender lines. At the Ice, one woman (Hannah) and four men have their own offices (see Figure 3). Liam and Willow share an office space, while the rest of the staff works in cubicles. The tickets sales executive cubicles occupy an area referred to as the "sales pit," two rows of three small cubicles. Finley, the sole woman in the department and the senior account executive, and Clayton, the department's newest member and lowest sales performer, occupy the two cubicles closest to the back wall of the office. Rebecca, the administrative assistant, sits at a reception desk in the lobby, which is separated from the rest of the office by a door and a short hallway. The spatial

arrangement of workplaces can signify “identity markers” (Elsbach, 2004), with aspects such as the size of one’s office serving as an indicator of one’s place in the organizational hierarchy (Strati, 1999). Having a private office, in particular, denotes status in the workplace (Konar et al., 1982). At the Ice, the spatial arrangement conveys the status of the (mostly) men who hold leadership positions, while almost all of the women are physically positioned on the outer edges of the workspace.

Figure 3: Spatial Arrangement by Gender at the Ice’s Offices



X: Men O: Women

The Blades’ offices also reveal gender segregation, but where the Ice’s segregation is primarily a result of positional hierarchy (e.g., the only woman in leadership is the only woman with an office; the assistant sitting at reception), at the Blades, this spatial segregation is related more to the gender composition of departments (see Figure 4). Three men and three women—five of the directors and the chief revenue officer—have private offices. The two directors without their own office are both men. However, if the physical layout of the office is divided in half, almost all of the women work in one half of the office. The first half of the office, closest to the entrance, contains

the team's ticket sales and operations staff, the mascot coordinator, video production manager, and the media relations director. Of the 10 individuals working in this half of the office, only one of them—Brittany, the assistant ticket sales manager—is a woman. The other half of the office contains the marketing department, corporate sales department, foundation director, merchandise manager, business operations assistant, and chief revenue officer. Eight of the 11 people working in this half of the office are women. This physical arrangement based on job roles reflects how spatial gender segregation in organizations has shifted from the formal separation of men and women at work that existed in the past to a more subtle segregation with spaces designated for "men's work" and "women's work" (Spain, 1992; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2015).

Figure 4: Spatial Arrangement by Gender at the Blades' Offices

𝕏: Men ◎: Women

Workplace Settings

In addition to the similarities and differences in the structural arrangements of the Ice and the Blades, similarities and differences also exist in the sights, sounds, and social interactions present in the two organizations' workplaces. In describing these workplace artifacts below, I strive to make concrete the aspects of the organization that are

experienced by its members every day. Examining these elements of the organization, such as the artwork on the wall or the language used in the workplace, can offer insights into how social processes and organizational discourse contributes to the gendered nature of organizations (Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003).

Sights and Sounds

The office atmosphere at the Ice feels more relaxed than at the Blades. On typical work days, music of varying genres—such as dance, Latin, and 80s and 90s pop—blares from a speaker into the main workspace where most of the staff works in cubicles, so loudly it can be difficult to hear people speak if you are not standing right next to them. Staff members sometimes sing along while working at their desks. The office at the Ice is also quite messy. Boxes are stacked and strewn about; many desks are covered with loose paperwork and crowded with personal mementoes. Even the office fridge seems particularly questionable in terms of cleanliness. A large television is mounted to the wall above the door to the president, Carl's, office, facing the "sales pit" cubicles. Often, the TV is tuned to the NHL Network during the day, the volume of the TV on low though really only audible in between breaks in the music. Occasionally the TV screen shows graphics with a "sales team revenue leaderboard"—one day it might show the current sales numbers of the ticket sales staff; other days, the number of calls made and "talk time" by each account executive. This "leaderboard," along with a printout pinned to a bulletin board in the office listing the ranking of the account executives' sales performance in relation to the entire hockey league, seems to conflict with the otherwise laid back environment and underscores the sales mindset of the organization. This sales mindset—and the team's perceived sales success—also seems to serve as a way of

distinguishing the current organization from the hockey franchise that preceded it in the city. Kurt, the director of corporate sales, who also worked for the previous team, offered this comparison of the two franchises:

> Obviously we've achieved a lot of success since the changeover in ownership and changeover in leadership. I mean we went, the last year of the [previous team] when I was here, I think our per game attendance was...maybe around three [thousand]. And now this past year, you know, we only played 31 out of 38 [games, due to the pandemic-induced season suspension]. But through 31, we were at 5200. With nine or 10 sellouts. And we were over 5000 two years ago.

A decal of the numbers representing the seating capacity for the team's arena adorns the wall space above the president's office door, also highlighting the pressure to "sell out" of tickets. The number is flanked on either side by two wings, creating a look reminiscent of the U.S. Air Force emblem. This military imagery is reinforced further by a photograph that spans the entire length of another wall of the office, of several staff members (eight men and one woman, in team polos and holding up team jerseys) posing with eight men in military uniforms in front of a U.S. Air Force jet. Other military-themed elements are present in the team's branding. As Garsombke (1988, p. 47) wrote, "By adopting military models, concepts, and terminologies in their organizational operations, many managers may be creating a military culture for their organizations." The military has long been associated with hegemonic masculinity, and is considered (along with sports) to be a masculine preserve: "an area of social life that (many) men use to resist their (potential) loss of power" (Davis, 1997, p. 56). Sport and the military are often used in tandem to (re)produce discourses of hegemonic masculinity, as military imagery is common in men's sport—and largely absent from women's sport (Yanity, 2020). In the Ice's administrative offices, the use of military images symbolizes the value of masculinity in the sport organization.

Another wall decal in the office, on the back wall above the "sales pit" area, also conveys masculinity. It reads (capitalization original to the decal):

> POUND THE ROCK
> When nothing seems to help, I go and look at a stonecutter HAMMERING AWAY AT HIS ROCK perhaps a HUNDRED TIMES without as much as a crack showing in it. Yet at the hundred and first blow it WILL split in two, and I know it was NOT that blow that did it, BUT ALL THAT HAD GONE BEFORE.

This quote seems to be a metaphor for the work of ticket selling; that it may take many calls and points-of-contact before a sale is made. Yet its example of the stonecutter (gendered as a man) and metaphor of selling to strength further connects the organization, and the ticket sales department specifically, to the value of masculinity.

Comparatively, the Blades' office was quiet. Employees sometimes had low music playing on their computers and conversations were scattered throughout the day—both work-related and otherwise—but large blocks of time could pass without hearing anyone speak. The office was quiet enough that often the only sounds I could hear were the typing on keyboards or the rumblings of the building's ventilation system. Daniel, the chief revenue officer, indicated that he felt the staff was "low energy" and pondered that this may have been a result of hiring people who "look like you [himself]" (though he referred not to looks specifically, but rather personality in this conversation). He shared that it was hard because of this low energy to know if people cared about their jobs. Daniel also pointed out that under the previous team president, who had served in that role for the first several years of the team's existence and had retired a couple years prior, the staff was very "buttoned up." Though Daniel has since taken over day-to-day leadership of the organization, more than a quarter of the staff, including Daniel, had joined during the previous president's helm, and this "buttoned up" operation still seems

apparent. The office is much neater and more organized, and any mess that is deemed out of line is called out by Daniel or Marilyn, the senior director of corporate sales and the second highest ranking individual working in the office. They ask staff members to move boxes or other clutter to "the cage" (an on-site storage area in the arena) or to off-site storage, and remind staff to clear their food out of the office refrigerator. Any items overflowing from workspaces are contained within boxes or bins, neatly stacked in corners or against walls. Even this amount of visible storage seems unacceptable to Marilyn, who complained to me about the "state of the office" as she gestured towards the row of cubicles where the marketing department works.

This "buttoned-up" workplace extends to the way the staff approaches work as well. The staff hold frequent meetings: standing weekly meetings for the department heads and Daniel, for each department, and one-on-ones for direct reports, as well as additional meetings to discuss specific projects. On one Monday, Gina, the marketing director, attends five different weekly recurring meetings: a one-on-one with Daniel, the department head meeting, a marketing strategy meeting, a game operations meeting, and a building operations meeting. The "buttoned up" nature is also reflected through the use of scheduling tools and other project management and tracking systems. Ted, the corporate sales coordinator, explained the emphasis the organization places on tracking their work, describing it comes from the direction of Marilyn, his boss: "[W]e are very detail oriented here. Like I said, we track everything from ticket usage to suite usage to how many coupons were distributed this night to how many fans were in the building. We're very detail oriented. That's how Marilyn likes it." Large white boards in the offices

are used primarily to communicate to-do lists or capture planning. The whiteboard above the corporate sales coordinators' cubicles, for instance, reads:

> 2019-20 Season
> * Add Club Seats to Shot-List
> * passing out programs
> * upcoming game scoreboard graphic

The white board in Gina's office, meanwhile, is taken up by two lists with ideas for the following season's theme nights and promotional items. During a marketing team meeting in her office, Barrett, the video production manager, stood up from his chair next to the white board multiple times to add items to the list, though this was not the subject of the meeting.

These white boards are the most dominant wall décor in the office. Where the walls of the Ice's office featured team-branded wall wraps and framed jerseys, at the Blades, only a framed photo of the arena would suggest that the office is one where the staff of a hockey team works. While employees have team memorabilia at their desks or in their own office spaces, the office itself is largely void of team branding. The walls are beige aside from the dark green paint along the wall framing the doors and windows to the offices and the shared kitchenette. Such restrained color schemes and bland aesthetics have been shown to signify bureaucracy (Guillén,1997; Rosen et al.,1990; Wasserman & Frankel, 2015). Motivational quotes, too, are not present in shared spaces, but in the office spaces of individual staff. As such, they communicate less shared organizational values than individual ones. This results in contrasting messaging broadcast through the offices. For example, on the glass wall outside of Marilyn's office, a decal reads "SET YOUR GOALS HIGH and don't STOP TILL YOU get there BELIEVE YOU CAN & you are HALFWAY THERE DO IT" (capitalizations original). But on the interior wall of

the office next door, which belongs to Bob, the director of corporate sales, hangs a large, framed poster featuring a character from "The Simpsons" and the words "YOU'RE NOT PAID TO THINK," "A MINDLESS WORKER IS A HAPPY WORKER," and "DO YOUR JOB" (capitalizations original).

Such language as the latter poster connects with the Blades' previously discussed adherence to the positional hierarchy as well an apparent resistance to change. In particular, while the staff brainstorm and develop ideas for implementation, even small details (like the decorations used for a promotional night) are subject to the chief revenue officer, Daniel's, approval. During planning, staff pre-emptively discuss whether Daniel might veto an idea, such as when Hollie replies to an idea suggested in a meeting by saying, "I don't think Daniel will let us do that." They also make multiple mentions of Daniel's preference to maintain the status quo and dislike of change. Take for example this excerpt from my fieldnotes, as members of the ticket sales department discussed what the ticket price should be for an upcoming promotion:

> Leo: "Just keep it what we did last year."
> Steve: "Y'all need to decide."
> Keith tells Brittany to bring it up in the meeting on Tuesday. They discuss how Daniel doesn't like change. Steve mouths this last point to Dave, who is now standing next to him. Dave says he is done suggesting ideas after today.

The hierarchical organization of labor has been noted to have its roots in patriarchy (Hartman, 1976), which is a system that defines women's status as wards of the men they are related to (Muller, 1977). The patriarchy of the positional hierarchies in organizations has been said to contribute to divisions of labor along gender lines, as it communicates a hierarchical relationship between men and women (Hartman, 1976). So connected are these hierarchies to the gendering of organizations that Acker (1990) called

for the elimination of hierarchies altogether in order to achieve gender neutral organizations. The Blades' hierarchical organization, then, may be promoting a patriarchal mindset and (re)producing the gendered nature of the organization.

Social Interactions and Behaviors

The informality of the Ice's workplace continues through the behaviors and social interactions of the staff members, often in ways that value masculinity and may exclude women and some men. Casual banter amongst the staff is common, and often peppered with swear words and sexual innuendos (though multiple employees describe the culture as "family friendly"). For example, Finley, a senior account executive, asked Martin, an account executive, "Do you suck them all off?", in reference to gifts he received from clients. When the ticket sales manager, Mason, mentioned that he was at the mall shopping for a sweater for himself, one of his supervisees, Sean, retorted, "At Victoria's Secret?" And during the team's holiday party, at which staff members competed in an "Ugly Christmas Sweater" contest, both Tina and Kurt made jokes about Tina's "nips"—the small bottles of liquor she had placed in the decorative stockings situated across her chest on her sweater. Other research has shown that men use sexist jokes in the sport workplace as means of "testing" women's tolerance, and women will laugh and even participate in this type of joking as a way to demonstrate that they belong (Hindman & Walker, 2020; Shaw, 2006).

Many of the men at the Ice use nicknames for each other such as those common in hockey locker rooms, adding a "-y" or an "-er" to the end of their names as a sign of familiarity. The use of nicknames for athletes is a common practice in sport (Bobyreva, 2017), and here, it seems to have migrated to the administrative office as well.

Nicknames can denote status and the conveying of nicknames denotes control, and research has shown that practice is more common amongst men than women—though in social situations where women have control, they are as likely as men to use nicknames (Leslie & Skipper, 1990). That nicknames are used at the Ice amongst the men and not the women conveys that men occupy positions of greater status and possess control of the environment. At the Blades, this pattern of nicknaming is absent, though Daniel and some of the other employees frequently refer to two of the employees—a woman, Haley, and a man, Tom—by their last names.

The Ice's workspace is also physical—multiple times during observations I witnessed men in the office hitting or poking each other, and joking about doing it at other times, in what seems to be interpreted as a sign of friendship. One day, the staff threw a ball around the conference room in a game of "hot potato" while waiting for a meeting to start. Other examples of physical activity in the office include a planking challenge amongst members of the ticket sales team, as well as a golf putting competition that acts as a reward for the sales staff's call numbers. Activities such as the planking and golf putting reward performances of masculinity in the workplace, which will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 6.

Despite being an overall quieter work environment, the Blades' office is also a social workspace, with banter between coworkers demonstrating their familiarity with each other. Where the Ice staff are more physical in their interactions with each, the Blades staff are more teasing, with sometimes cutting jabs directed at each other. For example, in this interaction, George, a ticket sales account executive, teasingly chides his

supervisor Keith, the assistant manager of ticket sales, who sneezes while the ticket sales staff was otherwise quietly working:

> Keith sneezes.
> George: “Shut up Keith.”
> Keith: “Sorry.”

Daniel, the chief revenue officer, often makes fun of the younger staff for their naivete and lack of knowledge of historical events, as he did in this conversation with Annie, the corporate activation coordinator:

> Annie: “I looked up Typhoid Mary last night.”
> Daniel (from his office, in an exasperated tone): “OH MY GOD!!!!”
> Annie: “It was bad.”
> Daniel: “Y’all don’t know shit.”

Daniel’s use of a curse word was not an unusual occurrence at the Blades. Employees at both the Ice and the Blades frequently peppered their conversations with swear words. At the Ice for example, Tina answered Finley’s query about whether she had signed a card for Carl, the president, with “Yes. I wrote ‘merry fucking Christmas.’” Sean, a ticket sales account executive, teased an intern saying that it did not matter if he had sold tickets that day because he “fucked up” the printer. At the Blades, Bianca, the merchandise manager, told Gina and Penny to “Just have him [a player] sign a bunch of shit before he goes” while discussing selling hockey pucks at upcoming games. Daniel relayed an update about the COVID-19 pandemic to Marilyn, saying “Rudy Gobert [the NBA player whose positive COVID-19 test led to that league’s suspension of the season] issued an apology…fuck you, you shut down the entire fucking sport industry.” Though prior research has demonstrated that swearing can be a way of “doing gender” for men—and specifically a way that men interact with each other—at the Ice and the Blades,

women and men seem equally likely to use swear words in their conversations (Faulkner, 2009).

The dress in the office is also more casual at the Ice than at the Blades. On my first day of observations, Hannah, the Ice's director of finance and human resources, greeted me wearing a gray tracksuit. The typical office attire seemed to be not quite as casual as that, but rather, as Kurt described, polos, three-quarter zips, and khakis—at least for the men. On Friday and Saturday games, most of the staff wore business professional attire, though the men sometimes did not wear ties, and some staff dressed more casually according to their role. For Wednesday and Sunday games, the staff often dressed more casually in team attire. Hannah and others in the organization indicated there is some consternation over managing the dress code of employees, with Hannah describing needing to send an email to staff when the owner is coming into the office to remind them not to wear shorts or sneakers. However, the organization does not have a formal written dress code—another indication of the Ice's less formal management structure.

The Blades, meanwhile, were strictly business casual in the office—though Marilyn, the team's senior director of corporate sales, complained that the younger women in the office had dressed too casually in the past. She described how a couple of women wore jeans on their first day of work, and how they would, in the summer, wear dresses that she deemed inappropriate, as this field notes excerpt[2] demonstrates:

> Marilyn asks me if Daniel told me about "No Bra Tuesdays." She tells me that during the summer, some of the women would not wear bras to work. She says that she may be old fashioned, but she thinks that you should wear a bra to work, every day. She says one day she was having a meeting in her office and was so distracted that she stopped the meeting. She went to Daniel and told him they weren't wearing bras again, and he said "I know. I cancelled all my meetings."

[2] This excerpt, and the dress codes of both organizations in general, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

> She tells me she "can't bring clients in here." She says they would wear dresses that were meant to be swimsuit coverups, and you could see that they were wearing thongs. She tells me they wear halter tops, and that you can see their tattoos and piercings. I mention to her that Ellen had told me at lunch that she saw Bailey wearing a crop top in the office one day. She says in the summer, it was "flip flops every day," and with "unpolished toes."

During games, attire at the Blades was business professional for all employees regardless of role, with the men wearing suits and ties and the women wearing blazers over either dresses or blouses and work pants.

Meetings at the Ice appear to be less structured than at the Blades, and occur less frequently. In the weekly staff meetings, Carl runs the meeting, but there is no clear organization to the topics covered and there is a lot of overtalk and jumping between subjects. At the Blades, while meetings do not always have a formal agenda, the person running the meeting dictates the flow and keeps the attendees on task. Most meetings come to a close in a similar fashion, with the person running the meeting signifying its close with the phrase, "Thanks and Go Blades."

Conclusion

Though the Ice and the Blades appear at first to be similarly organized, a closer examination reveals differences between the two. Still, aspects of the structural arrangements and workplace settings are gendered at both organizations. In particular, job roles and duties at both organizations highlight divisions along gender lines. When men and women are segregated into different job roles, this can (re)produce the assumption that men and women have different aptitudes and interests (Ely & Padavic, 2007). At the Ice, organizational discourse and physical interactions demonstrate ways that masculinity is valued, while at the Blades, a strict adherence to the hierarchy suggests a patriarchal form of management.

In the following three chapters, I examine specific elements of these structural arrangements and settings in further detail. Specifically, I analyze the social practices of dress codes (Chapter 5) and workplace rituals (Chapter 6). Then, in Chapter 7, I revisit the concept of organizational hierarchies in an analysis of the role that multiple, gendered hierarchies play in the downsizing decisions made at both organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHAPTER 5

DRESS CODES

The underrepresentation of women in sport organizations can be explained not only by the biases and actions of individuals, but also through the examination of socially constructed organizational practices (Calás et al., 2014). This chapter examines one such practice—dress codes—to understand how dress contributes to gender disparities in sport organizations. Dress is an informal practice that communicates differences between men and women, resulting in divisions along gender lines in organizations (Acker, 1990; Shaw, 2006). On the job, acceptable dress is learned through interactions with coworkers and dress code policies (Dellinger, 2002). In addition to gender, dress can communicate status and power (Crane, 2000). For example, men strategically use dress to construct masculinities appropriate for different situations—choosing a suit to convey authority or casual clothes to appear more relatable (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008).

While prior literature has demonstrated that dress signals gender differences, the purpose of this chapter is to understand how dress codes affect men and women differently. In the following pages, I discuss how gender differences exist not only in expectations of dress, but also in feelings about and evaluations of work clothes. First, I describe how dress codes are socially constructed even in the absence of formal written dress policies in organizations, as is the case at the Ice. Next, I discuss differences in the ways in which women and men talk about dress and fashion at work. I then turn to an examination of how women are challenged by—and men empowered by—dress expectations at the Ice and Blades. Lastly, I examine how critique of men's and women's dress differs. In particular, critiques toward men are superficial, amounting to teasing. In

contrast, women face judgment of their dress that affects evaluations of overall professionalism and job performance. In one case, a manager cites complaints about a woman's dress as a reason she is let go from the organization.

Dress Codes as Socially Constructed Practice

While some organizations have formal dress codes that define rules around acceptable ways of dressing, organizational dress norms are socially constructed, commonly learned through workplace interactions (Dellinger, 2002). The Ice, for example, do not have a formal dress code policy, but instead what is considered "acceptable" is continuously negotiated and discussed. The appropriate way to dress varies for certain occasions and job roles, as well as by gender.

Though the Ice do not have a formally established dress code, Carl, the team's president, and Hannah, the director of finance and human resources, provide direction to the staff through verbal and written communication. The staff, too, participates in communicating acceptable dress by calling out colleagues who they deem out of line. For example, in the following field notes excerpt, after telling me on my first day of observations that the team has "some dress code issues," Hannah shared an example of how she does this—and how the staff responds if she herself is ever out of line with her own dress code communication:

> She shares that she has multiple pairs of shoes under her desk and will change them based on what she is doing…and that sometimes she forgets to change them and people will say something. She tells me that she sent an email to the staff ahead of the team owners coming into the office for a meeting, detailing what the dress code would be…no shorts, no sleeveless tops, no sneakers. And now if the staff sees sneakers, they will make a big deal of it to her.

Staff members often point to Carl, as team president, as the one who determines how the staff should dress. In particular, they refer to him as giving them permission to

dress in certain ways. For instance, Greg, the ticket operations account executive, shared that on weeknight and Sunday games, the staff dresses more casually than the business professional dress expected on Fridays and Saturdays. He said for these games, “Carl usually is nice enough to kinda give us a more casual kind of polo option to wear.” He continued, explaining how this information is communicated:

> Usually at this point, it's more standard. I think a lot of us will just kind of do a double-check with him. And he'll usually maybe say it at the Wednesday meeting just to kind of, obviously if it's for that next Sunday, but if it is a Wednesday game, might say it on the day before, but usually we try and just double check to make sure like, 'Hey, we're still good to wear polos because it's a Wednesday?' And 99% of the time, he's okay with that.

Martin, a ticket sales account executive, also refers to Carl when describing the office dress code: “I know ties aren't required. He doesn't force us to wear ties.” This use of the word “force” suggests that dressing a certain way is something that employees feel compelled to do by leadership of the organization. Employees also associate the dress code as a means of communicating something about the organization, referring to the intention of demonstrating a “professional” appearance—or as James, another ticket sales account executive, put it, “just trying to show that we're a classy establishment.” Indeed, many adopt a corporate perspective that “well-dressed” employees will impress clients or customers (Cardon & Okoro, 2009). Kurt, the director of corporate sales, pointed to another business purpose in the office dress norm of wearing team-branded polo shirts or pullovers:

> So usually we're wearing either league or team kit, which is nice ‘cause it's like a walking billboard. I always like whenever I go on a meeting, I don't wear a jacket and tie, I wear a team polo. And usually people really like that. You know, anybody can wear a jacket and tie on a meeting, but I want to stand out and differentiate myself, so I wear a team polo and they're like, 'oh nice shirt." And then, if they're a nice sponsor, I'll say 'I'll get you one, what size are you?'

Despite the lack of a written dress code, the men in the office were all able to clearly communicate the dress expectations—at least for men. They described business casual attire during workdays in the office, with the team-branded polos and pullovers or dress shirts as well as dress slacks or khakis. As Vic, a ticket sales account executive described:

> It's always business casual, but if you have a meeting, more, at least for us, dress pants, dress shirt. If you don't have a meeting, if you play golf, you know, [chuckles] that's probably what I would describe the dress code as. You know, khakis or long slacks, you know what I mean? With a polo, an Ice pullover is acceptable.

Vic's comparison of the office dress code to dressing for the golf course underscores the masculine associations of appropriate dress in the organization. Corporate dress and professional appearance are inherently masculine (Haynes, 2012), and the golf course has traditionally been used as an extension of the corporate world; an informal place for men to meet and do business (Ceron-Anaya, 2010). Indeed, even professional women golfers must navigate gendered standards about what is appropriate to wear on the golf course, while women who golf recreationally find that many golf course pro shops offer limited options for women (McGinnis et al, 2005; Gregg et al., 2020). That expected dress at the Ice includes this golf attire—much of which is provided by the team—leaves women with clothing options that are not designed for them.

Game-night dress at the Ice, for men, is described as suits, with or without a tie, though men in more behind-the-scenes roles—such as Peter, the director of marketing—dress more casually. While the men were easily able to communicate this (Kurt prefaced his response to my inquiry about the dress code as being "easy" to answer), they also indicated that for women, it may not be so clear-cut. Kurt, in describing the dress code,

said, “And then, obviously game days is jacket and tie with usually dress pants. And for guys, and for ladies as well, I mean typically it's polos and khakis all the time except for game night.” Greg stated, “And then on a game day, the typical dress code obviously is the more professional for the suit kind of dress code for men and same equivalent for women.” Comments like these position women as a secondary consideration in terms of the dress norms of the organization, where women are expected to conform their clothing choices to the expectations set by how men dress. Vic more clearly expressed that he does not know what is appropriate for women to wear:

> But yeah, business casual, polos, things like that. So...at least for men. I, you know, I don't know what it's appropriate for a girl to wear at this point, to be honest with you. [laughs]. I don't know. I'm not entirely sure during the week what that...

Here, he trails off before returning to explain what men wear in the office. As the nature of professionalism is inherently gendered as masculine, so too is the idea of what it means to look professional (Haynes, 2012). While corporate attire is purportedly meant to convey a neutral look, it has been based on men’s attire and is often difficult for women to dress accordingly (Hollander, 1995). Dress codes, while straightforward for men, can often be more complex—and less clear—for women.

Despite these clear explanations of what to wear (at least for men), employees described how dress norms have shifted and how people sometimes dress outside the established norms. As Greg shared:

> Do people obviously try and toe the line? I think anyone can see that's the case and sometimes I think it's hard for management to say something ‘cause I think sometimes you just wanna pick your battles and don't want to keep pressing an issue that sometimes might not be a huge issue to have.

Martin explained how rather than being disciplined when dressing in a way deemed inappropriate, managers will gently suggest that employees dress differently, saying:

> If you come into work one day and it's something that doesn't seem professional, I think it might help to say, 'hey, let's get back to, you know, what we've been doing with the polo or button-down shirt type of thing.'

Staff members indicate ways that organizational dress, particularly on game nights, has become more casual over time. In part, this has come at the direction of the team president, such as the aforementioned casual dress on weeknight and Sunday games. Others were more of a group effort, such as the expectations around wearing ties on game nights, as relayed by Martin:

> If I recall, I think the first season I always wore a tie, and then I think someone didn't wear a tie on a Friday and the team won. So it's like, ‘oh you know, no tie Fridays, let's see how long we can ride this thing out.’ And then it kinda became a little more lax. So it allows us to be a little more comfortable not having the tie there swinging around and still makes us look professional and just be more comfortable talking with people, running around, not sweating as much.

Vic described how he has been personally moving toward more casual dress in the office, based on his experiences at one of his clients:

> I honestly am trying to get into like if you don't have a meeting, get to like the jean routine, things like that. I mean, I have worked directly with [a large local company]. They've got like 4,000 people over there. And every time I go there, it's like walking into Google, people are hanging out wearing jeans and T-shirts, on their laptops, drinking coffee, and I'm like 'whoa!' This is a change of pace here.

Vic also mentioned his decision to adopt the “no tie” look on game nights, based on his perceptions of what is the stylish look now:

> I mean, I got into the trend this year of not wearing a tie every single game. Just because me personally, I think that's kind of the look now. I don't know, I could be wrong. I could be trending in the wrong direction, but I just feel like that's kind of a business look you see more now.

Vic's perceptions of appropriate dress, then, are being shaped not only by the instructions he has received from organizational leaders and cues he has taken from his colleagues, but also others he interacts with outside of the organization. Previous research has also found that young men, in particular, resist more formal attire in sport organizations, pushing for casual dress to project a more inviting image to others (Shaw, 2006).

Discussing Fashion

While thinking about clothing might traditionally be considered the domain of women, both women and men discuss and comment on clothing and appearance as part of their workplace conversations at the Ice and Blades. Typically, these conversations are between women or between men, though occasionally women and men discuss dress together.

Amongst women, dress and appearance are a frequent topic of casual conversation, both related to work appearance and more generally. Women compliment each other on particular pieces of clothing or on their hair, but they also discuss tips for shopping and fashion, such as Tina, the Ice's corporate sales account executive, discussing clothing rental companies with Lisa, an intern, or Annie, a corporate service coordinator at the Blades, asking the women in the marketing department, "Have you heard of the Style Book app?" The following excerpt captures a conversation that occurred while several staff members (and me) were gathering for a meeting in the office of the Blades' marketing director, Gina:

> Gina apologizes to Bailey [the graphic designer] if she ran over her foot, and makes a comment about really liking the shoes. Bailey tells her they are "the same ones," and Gina says she didn't recognize them.
>
> Hollie [the marketing coordinator]: "It's the pants." [referring to Bailey's pants, which feature wide red, white, and black vertical stripes]

> Gina: “The pants are just so good…I really liked linearly striped pants.”
>
> Hollie: “What did Annie say?”
>
> Bailey: “Yes, yes, yes, girl!”
>
> Gina makes a comment about Bailey’s “blue power suit”, and Penny [business operations assistant] asks what she’s talking about. Bailey describes it and says that “James hates it.” She says when she wears it he says, “No black today?”
>
> Gina: “I wear all black on game days….”[then, directed toward me] “I look like a stagehand.”
>
> Hollie: “I’m just going to stick to my random pants and random blazer.”
>
> Gina: “You look good on game days.”

This particular meeting involved four women and one man, plus me, and the conversation prior to the meeting starting focused exclusively on clothing. Barrett, the video production manager and sole man attending, did not participate in the conversation.

On occasion, women and men discuss dress and appearance together. The instances in which this occurs involve making remarks specifically about what someone is wearing or how they look that day, such as when Bailey asked Daniel, the Blades’ chief revenue officer, “Is that a hot sauce tie?” This prompted a conversation about his tie selection for the game, which featured the branding of a popular hot sauce. Usually, these conversations between men and women are initiated by women, but on one occasion a man initiates comments on a woman’s appearance, as detailed in the following excerpt from the Ice:

> Anna [social media intern] comes into the office. She is wearing glasses and has her hair styled in a high bun on top of her head. Liam [marketing producer] comments on her going with the bun. She says she didn’t feel like messing with her hair. Liam tells her that it’s fine. He says she’s got the glasses too and he brought his as well; that his contacts are bothering him. She says hers are fake. “I wear them when I don’t want to put anything else on my face.”

In this exchange, Liam appears to find it notable that Anna has gone with a more casual look than usual, pointing out both her choice of hairstyle and eyewear. He does not directly compliment her appearance in the way that women compliment other women, but neither does he criticize her. Anna's explanation of her appearance, meanwhile, indicate that she felt this choice of hairstyle and glasses were an alternative available to her instead of a more labor-intensive hair or makeup routine.

Though talking about dress may traditionally be considered the domain of women, men too talk to each other about dress and appearance. However, where women talk about shopping and past and future fashion choices, men focus on the present. For example, Dave, the Blades' ticket sales director, comments to Leo, a ticket sales executive, "You've got your bling on tonight," referring to the championship ring that Leo is wearing on his finger. In another instance, George, also a ticket sales executive at the Blades, walks into the office and to his desk, wearing his suit. As he does, a "cat call" whistle comes from a nearby office, where Dave and Steve, the director of ticket operations, are talking.

In both the conversations amongst men and the conversations between men and women, rarely are genuine compliments on dress and appearance offered. Instead, comments reflect observations (e.g., "You are wearing this") or, as with the cat call, seemingly done in jest. Women, meanwhile, regularly offer compliments to each other. It may be that, between women, complimenting each other's appearance may seem socially appropriate, whereas it may be deemed sexually harassing if coming from a man (Dellinger, 2002). Additionally, women's compliments of each other demonstrate a way in which they are 'mobilizing femininities' in the workplace by actively supporting each

other (Kelan & Carr, 2016; van den Brink & Benshop, 2014). In workplaces that value masculinities and in which the men outnumber the women, the women use fashion as a way to connect and find solidarity with each other.

Challenges for Women

As previously mentioned, the dress code for women in these organizations is less clear cut than it is for men. Women working for both the Ice and the Blades mention difficulties that they have with dressing for their jobs, both in terms of meeting expectations as well as allowing them to perform their job duties.

Navigating appropriate dress appears challenging for women, in part because while people have difficulty explaining what constitutes appropriate, they have clear ideas about what is *not* appropriate. As Vic, a ticket sales account executive at the Ice, shared:

> I feel like I don't know what is, you know, for a girl what's considered… business... professional. I know what's not considered business, you know what I mean? But like I...you know, if I was a girl in the office right now, I wouldn't know what to wear [laughs].

Prompted to share what he thinks would not be business professional for women, Vic explained:

> Like very low-cut shirts. You know, high waisted skirt, that route I think? I don't know, if I'm I wrong, you know, I'm sorry, but like... […] I mean, I think it's like for, you know, like a low cut shirt would be like me wearing a suit with a button down but only having like three buttons buttoned and having my whole chest out. Like, you know Carl would be like, 'What the heck are you wearing?' [chuckles] You know what I mean? Like...kind of similar.

Annie, a corporate service coordinator at the Blades, explained to me during a game night conversation how women have to carefully navigate the way that they dress:

> Annie says, "Men have it easy." She says there are so many things that you can "go wrong" with as a woman. She says that you can't wear heels because you

> need to be able to walk on the ice, but then you have to be careful with flats because sometimes they aren't dressy enough. Meanwhile, she says, "Ted [the other corporate service coordinator] can wear his fancy sneakers."

Here, Annie is suggesting that beyond figuring out what is appropriate to wear, making sure that they do not "go wrong" and are "dressy enough," women have to ensure that their clothing aligns with the job they are tasked to do, particularly on game nights. As Gregg et al. (2020) wrote, "Society apparently prefers women to appear feminine, yet professional, in workplace environments, but athletic competitions are not the typical workplace environment" (p. 226).

Though the former study examined the dress codes of women golfers—athletes in those competitions—the administrative staff of sport organizations also are performing more physical work than may be typical of an office environment. Most of the staff at both the Blades and the Ice are standing on their feet for hours at a time during games, and often walk around the arena multiple times. Some of them perform physical labor—such as merchandise managers carrying boxes and setting up their stores or marketing team members setting up displays and promotional giveaways. Given that both organizations are hockey teams, staff members often need to walk on the ice during pre- and post-game activities or intermissions. As Annie alluded, for men, their professional business attire allows them to perform such functions comfortably, as men's dress shoes today are designed similar to, in Annie's words, "fancy sneakers." Women have to think more carefully about their shoe choice. Hannah, the Ice's director of finance and human resources, stressed that I should wear comfortable shoes for game nights when we discussed the game-night dress code during my first day of observations, and the next day when I observed a game, lifted her pant leg to show me that her own boots had a wedge

heel to make them more comfortable. At the Blades, Hollie, the marketing coordinator, seems to ignore the dress shoe requirement completely, instead wearing a pair of sneakers with her dress pants and blazer. When the team's graphic designer, Bailey, asked her about her shoes after one game, Hollie responded that she has tried to wear boots but "can't do it on game nights," noting that they are not supportive enough for her.

In addition to the strain of being on their feet and the challenge of walking on the ice, women working for these organizations face another discomfort: the temperature. The venues for both organizations are arenas housing indoor hockey rinks, and while the offices are closed off from the ice rink, on game nights, employees are working in temperatures designed to keep the ice frozen. Many of the fans watching the games are adorned with hockey sweaters, sweatshirts, scarves, and knit caps. While the men point to their business professional attire—suits—as providing warmth in such a work environment, women's business attire typically features less coverage and lighter weight fabrics. Though I myself prepare for this environment—choosing to wear sweaters under my blazer, leggings under my dress pants, and dress boots on my feet—on some nights, the cold is distracting and uncomfortable enough that I describe it in my field notes. Annie, too, who had at that point been working for the Blades for about a month, commented to me about it:

> Annie asks me how long it takes to get used to the cold. I laugh and tell her never. I comment on how cold it was standing in the player tunnel [where the marketing staff works], and she says that it is really cold over there and that they now have a space heater.

Barrett, the Blades' video production manager, spends game nights at the highest level of the arena, further from the coldest temperatures at ice-level, and shared his concern for the women in the marketing department who have to work in the cold:

> He says he feels bad. “They are icicles down there,” he says. He tells me that when Sara [the former marketing director] worked here, she didn’t have the right shoes, that her shoes were too thin.

Clothing has often limited social roles for women, creating physical constraints on performing certain tasks (Eicher & Evenson, 2014). At the Blades, however, women do not appear to be prevented from performing certain jobs—in fact, women are more often in roles that require more movement, physical labor, and close proximity to the ice during games (with jobs in marketing, corporate service, and merchandise) while men hold roles that are more stationary or further from the ice (such as sales, video production, and media relations). The dress codes are not excluding women from performing their jobs—but they are ensuring that they will be uncomfortable while doing so.

Empowerment of Men

In contrast to the challenges the women face with conforming to dress norms, men describe the dress code as “easy” and matching their job. As Kurt, the Ice’s director of corporate sales, explained: “I mean typically it's polos and khakis all the time except for game night. So it's very, very consistent, very easy, and you know, we do get a lot of polos from the organization, which is nice.” This office dress code of wearing a polo or, as others described, a pullover demonstrates how clothes designed for men dominate what is considered acceptable dress—and that the team provides such clothing makes dressing even simpler for the men, compared to the women, who may be less comfortable in such attire and/or be deemed as dressing not feminine enough when wearing such clothes.

On game nights, most men in both organizations wear a suit—ties mandatory at the Blades, and optional at the Ice. While the women described game-night professional

dress as incongruent with their job roles, for the men, no such concerns exist. James, an Ice ticket sales account executive, notes that “It doesn't feel any different” than the more casual dress of working in the office. Greg, the ticket operations account executive at the Ice, described how his suit does not interfere physically with his job:

> Usually it's fine. I'll just say there's sometimes where I'm, whether it's just putting signs up, or I'm out moving around, but for the most part, if I have to really, I sometimes just have to take off my jacket really just so I don't destroy it. But for the most part, it really doesn't affect any sort of physical aspect of the job too much.

James also notes how for men, the suit has the added benefit of providing warmth when working in a cold hockey arena: “Thankfully, it's during the winter. So it's comfortable, keeps you warm and everything.”

Men also discuss how wearing a suit is not just a physical experience, but a psychological one as well: they like what it communicates about them and the organization, and they like how it makes them feel psychologically. Vic, an Ice account executive, noted how he thinks that because the Ice is a professional sport organization, “we have to look professional.” He explained:

> But I think us dressing up in a suit, you know, we're there to, bring in business and conduct business. So I think it's a professional way to dress. I agree with it. I like it. I like wearing a suit. I don't like wearing a suit every day. But I do like wearing it on the game nights for sure.

Greg echoed Vic’s thoughts on how a suit communicates something to people. He said:

> Because, especially in my role, which is again, technically part of the ticket sales department. And obviously someone a lot of times is the first that our customers see, that I think it's important to be in that sort of dress to give me the impression that the organization is a serious organization who wants to look professionally off the ice for their staff, and really make sure that we show our care for the customer.

Greg and Vic's comments suggest that dressing a certain way is necessary to perform a certain type of work. In this case, that dress, a suit, communicates professionalism and customer service. It communicates that they are capable of performing the job expected of them—and in contrast, should someone not dress this way, they would be judged as less competent (Kwon, 1994; Peluchette & Karl, 2007). Meanings of professionalism are tied to appearance, and are also strongly associated with masculinity (Connell, 1987; Dent & Whitehead, 2002; Haynes, 2012). The business suit represents both professionalism and masculinity for the men in these organizations.

The only complaint some men had regarding the dress code was related to footwear and wearing dress shoes while standing and walking. Though as Annie noted in the previously shared quote, men have the option to wear dress shoes that are more like "fancy sneakers," some men who wear less comfortable options still have complaints. For example, George, a Blades' ticket sales executive who had just returned to work in the organization after taking a hiatus from working in the sport industry, said to me during a game night, "I forgot how hard this is on your feet." Vic also noted how footwear can be uncomfortable, though he also suggested that he has options available to remedy this:

> But...like for me, it's like the dress shoes. 'Cause I run around so much, and you know, you're doing X amount of steps. I got to figure out like a comfier pair of dress shoes [laughs]. It's just that's the only thing where it's like the feet kills ya.

Beyond communicating perceived professionalism to others, men describe how putting on a suit affects them intrinsically. Business suits "symbolize a work mentality" and men have compared it to an athlete putting on a uniform (Dellinger, 2002, p. 9). As Martin, an Ice account executive shared, "I always love suiting up," adding that it "feels good." James described how putting on a suit changes his mindset:

> For the most part, it kinda just gets us focused. […] I guess, you know like I said, that it signals that it's game day, that it's time to work. You know, it's gonna be a long, long, long, tough day at work, but it's...something you've got to get through. Kinda, it just kind of gets me ready. Yeah, and I kinda look forward to it.

Suits, for men, seem to bring them a sense of empowerment and they perceive that they can bring them success as well. Peter, the marketing director at the Ice, described how he perceived that wearing a suit to his job interview contributed to the president's decision to hire him because it was part of the way that he "sold himself":

> I think it's because... honestly, like when I went to interview, I was wearing a full suit, jacket, you know, jacket, tie, everything and he [Carl] was just like, 'what the hell?' You know, he's used to just maybe a polo and khakis or dress pants and a dress shirt.

Many individuals use dress as means for career progression, believing that dressing a certain way can enhance career mobility (Kang et al., 2011). Interviews in particular are social situations in which clothing choices can be used to communicate whether an individual could "fit" in an organization—and violating dress norms during this occasion can affect perceptions, particularly if a candidate is considered less qualified (Oostrom et al., 2020)**.** Peter used his suit as a means to communicate his qualifications for the job during his interview, and perceived that it contributed to the impression he made on his future boss.

While men describe the dress code as being "easy" for them to follow, that does not mean that they do not put consideration into their clothing choices. Men talk about how they intentionally choose certain clothes, in particular ties. For example, Martin said:

> If they require the tie, I wouldn't have a problem with it as well. Got a lot, got a couple cool ones I like show off, so...[laughs] I don't know, just kinda flashy, different colors, crazy designs. Kinda same way with the golf apparel as well, kinda get the, can't just be like one plain colors, it's got have a cool design on it or something like that.

Kurt talked about he uses ties as conversation starters with customers:

> I mean, I have my little lapel pin that I wear that, whenever, I'm either wearing an NHL team pin of our affiliate or I'm wearing our pin, a [league] pin, you know, a tie with my little hockey guys on it. I kind of get into that. I kinda like it. I don't mind it at all. […] During the years I kind of accumulated them. I used to have a couple of NFL ties from my days way back with the [NFL team he previously worked with], and I just started just buying them. So I have probably seven or eight different hockey ties with guys on skates. And you'd be surprised how many times a fan will say, 'Aw, I love that tie.' It's unbelievable. It's just a tie. But it's like, it happens constantly. 'Oh, I love that tie. Oh, you're wearing the red one today. Aw I love that.' You know, it's crazy. So I, yeah, I just like wearing them, and so that's all I wear. I just have them at my desk on a little hook and I'm like 'okay, what are we doing today? Ah, let's do the black one today.'

Neckties have been found to convey organizational belonging, and as a piece of clothing that is socially acceptable for men, but not women, to wear, women are positioned as others compared to men (Cameron, 1996). Men like Martin and Kurt can use their ties to communicate their personality and organizational association, and in the process build relationships with fans and sponsors, potential clients who are critical to their success in sales roles. Women lack this opportunity. Where women have to spend time thinking about whether or not their clothing choices will conform to expectations and allow them to be comfortable while doing their jobs, men can think more about using dress to express their personality and connect with customers, which particularly in relationship-oriented sales roles, can be a professional advantage.

Superficial Versus Judgmental Critique

Men and women in the organization are both subject to critique about their dress, but for women, this critique is more frequent, more judgmental, and can come with professional consequences. Men, in contrast, face critique that amounts to gentle teasing. Take for example the following scene from my observations at the Ice:

> During their conversation, Scott [merchandise manager] stands up at his desk and starts to adjust his wardrobe, tucking his red and blue plaid shirt into his blue pants in front of us. I look away, as it seems awkward to watch someone tucking in their shirt. Eric [lead intern] makes a comment to him about a brown belt. Then, Scott starts to tie a red patterned tie, making one attempt and then starting over. Eric tells him it had looked good, and then asks, "Are you counting your buttons?" I look at Scott and it does appear he is using his buttons to judge the length of the tie as he ties it. Scott smiles and laughs lightly. Eric comments about the belt again, telling Scott he needs to get a brown belt and I notice Scott's belt is black, but his shoes are brown.

Conversations such as this one occur in passing and are lighthearted in nature. Critique of women's clothing, on the other hand, is something that becomes part of how women are defined in the office and part of the overall evaluation of their job performance. Criticism of past dress missteps are regularly discussed, such as in a conversation I had with Marilyn, the Blades' senior director of corporate sales, in which she offered a lengthy commentary of her colleagues' professionalism while standing in the office kitchen during a game night:

> Marilyn asks me if Daniel told me about "No Bra Tuesdays." She tells me that during the summer, some of the women would not wear bras to work. She says that she may be old-fashioned, but she thinks that you should wear a bra to work, every day. She says one day she was having a meeting in her office and was so distracted that she stopped the meeting. She went to Daniel [chief revenue officer] and told him they weren't wearing bras again, and he said "I know. I canceled all my meetings." She tells me she "can't bring clients in here." She says they would wear dresses that were meant to be swimsuit coverups, and you could see that they were wearing thongs. She tells me they wear halter tops, and that you can see their tattoos and piercings. She says in the summer, it was "flip flops every day," and with "unpolished toes." Marilyn tells me, "That's how Gina [marketing director] fell down the stairs." She says Gina was wearing flip flops and on the phone. She was "out of compliance with dress code." Marilyn says, "Haley [foundation director] was the worst." She tells me that Haley would wear these short shift dresses, and that with her pregnant belly, they were even shorter. She says she would sit down and you could "see her panties." She tells me that Haley wore jeans on her first day to work, then adds, "Bailey [graphic designer] did too." Marilyn says that she came in one day and had had it, and told them they needed to put on some clothes. She tells me that she then went to her office and called [a person in human resources at their NHL affiliate] and told her she wasn't going to like what she just did, but that she couldn't stand it. She tells me that

> Andy [the team president] had come down from the NHL affiliate office, and that they were gathered in the meeting room because he wanted to address the staff. She says they were wearing their short thin dresses, and one of them was wearing a dress that you could see through when the sun shined through the window. She says that [the person from human resources] was there, and after the meeting Andy asked about who this and this were. She comments to me that [the original team president] would have never tolerated this.

Women often appraise each other's appearances at work (Dellinger, 2002), and Marilyn's comments reveal several things about her ideas about how women should dress in the office. One, comments about wearing a bra as well as having unpolished toes reveal that she expects women to conform to gendered norms around dress and appearance (Britton, 2017). Two, her comments about being distracted—as well as her relaying of Daniel also canceling his own meetings—by her coworkers' lack of bras reinforce the idea that women's bodies are disruptive and distracting in the workplace. Workplace dress can convey organizational norms about sexuality (Dellinger, 2002; Kennedy, 1993)—in this case, that any reminder of women as sexual beings does not belong. Three, her comments also suggest a generational gap in terms of what is considered acceptable office apparel. Marilyn admits that she is perhaps "old-fashioned," and as a woman in her 50s is critiquing the dress styles, tattoos, piercings, and even underwear choices of the other women she works with, who are all in their 20s and 30s. Her comments about Haley and Bailey's first-day misstep of wearing jeans—on a day when they could not have possibly had any real information about the dress code unless someone had previously told them—also demonstrate how these critiques shape long-term perceptions of women who now years later seem to have learned [at least during my observations] to dress more in line with the prescribed dress code. These young women may have benefitted from the insights of a senior woman in the organization to offer

them advice about expectations related to dress and makeup at work (Williams, 2018), but instead Marilyn adopts an adversarial stance regarding her colleagues' appearances.

Haley, one of the women who Marilyn called out during our conversation, is aware of how Marilyn—the most senior woman in the organization, in terms of both positional hierarchy and tenure—judges other women based on appearance. She shared how she reported behavior she deemed workplace bullying to human resources, though she says nothing came of her reporting this information:

> A lot of it was related to workplace attire and dress code, and making comments about how certain girls look a certain way and so and so wears makeup and does her hair, so she's obviously a better worker, because she feels better about herself, rather than actual output of her product. And I just find that so degrading. I mean what an awful thing to say, and then to say it to another female, you know, in regards to someone? Like you just, I don't know how that's ever appropriate.

Haley here is relaying how Marilyn is using dress and appearance as a benchmark to judge other women's professional performance. Finley, the senior ticket sales account executive at the Ice, faced similar judgments on the correlation of her dress and her performance, to her consternation, as relayed in the following excerpt from my field notes:

> Finley comments on how she is all about wearing comfortable shoes. "Obviously," she says, gesturing toward her feet, on which she wears canvas flats. She says she picks slides that are of a nicer material so she can get away with them. She tells me that she used to wear black jeans until she got told she couldn't. She says that Hannah told her they weren't professional, and Finley told her they came from the career section at the store. Finley says she doesn't think they should care what she wears as long as she is semi-professional and is selling.

As it turns out, 'they' did care about how she was dressing, as less than two months later, her appearance would be used as one of the reasons to justify the decision to layoff Finley when the organization downsized. Mason, the Ice's ticket sales manager, explained how Finley faced critique not only from her supervisors, but fans as well:

> And then we would get complaints from people about the way she dressed during games and things like that. And she had been spoken to by Hannah about that before. […] You know, the way she dressed in the office when, wearing jeans on days, like, multiple times, I would talk to her about that.

While dress was not the only reason that leadership at the Ice decided to layoff Finley—who was the only woman in the ticket sales department and had a better sales record than two of the other ticket sales staff members who kept their jobs—it was a contributing factor (I discuss the downsizing decisions in further detail in Chapter 7). Women who fail to conform with dress norms can be held back from opportunities due to the criticism they face (Shaw, 2006). Certainly, that Finley had been "spoken to" about the issue but continued to not meet expectations contributed to her negative evaluation. But comments from others in the organization, both during observations and during interviews, indicate that Finley was not the only one in the organization who violated dress expectations, and others had suggested that correcting such violations was not an organizational priority and was done through gentle suggestions because, as Greg said in a previously shared quote, it "might not be a huge issue to have." For Finley, however, it became a huge issue when it was used to evaluate her overall job performance—and ended up ultimately costing her job.

Conclusion

These findings furthering understandings of how sport organizations are gendered through the demonstration of ways in which everyday work practices create and sustain gender inequality. As Dellinger (2002) wrote, "The most insidious forms of discrimination start (and perhaps end) with the everyday norms of a workplace, not with individual 'bad apples' who actively attempt to block opportunities for women or other groups" (p. 6). Making these norms visible, Dellinger (2002) notes, is "an important step

in addressing workplace inequality" (p. 6). At the Ice and the Blades, organizational dress codes were not developed with the intent of disadvantaging women, but they reflect and reproduce gendered norms and socially constructed meanings of professionalism in ways that (re)produce divisions along gender lines (Acker, 1990).

Beyond communicating gender differences (Shaw, 2006), the findings demonstrate how gendered norms about dress disadvantage women in sport organizations, where jobs often require physical labor in non-office settings and women's professional dress does not align with such roles. Men's business suits and footwear are designed to accommodate the movements required for the job, whereas women's professional attire either prohibits or makes uncomfortable such work. In working for hockey organizations, employees at the Ice and the Blades also must contest with chilly temperatures inside ice arenas, another area in which the full coverage business suit, socks, and shoes worn by men serve superior to women's options, which often include thinner fabrics, lower cut necklines, and dress shoes that are not worn with socks. Coupled with research that demonstrates that women perform optimally when working in warmer temperatures than men—and women's performance suffers more in colder temperatures than men's does in warmer ones—women working in these organizations are doubly disadvantaged when dress codes preclude them from being able to choose the clothes that they would be most comfortable wearing (Chang & Kajackaite, 2019).

Employees of both organizations view dressing "professionally" as communicating competence for both the organizations and their individual members (Kwon, 1994; Peluchette & Karl, 2007). Men like Vic and Greg at the Ice pointed to "business professional dress" as a sign to organizational outsiders, such as fans and

sponsors, that they are good at their jobs and that the organization is legitimate. Meanwhile, at the Blades, Marilyn deemed women colleagues as "unprofessional" if their dress was out of line with her expectations. But meanings of professionalism are also tied to masculinity, just as "professional" dress was designed to be masculine (Connell, 1987; Dent & Whitehead, 2002; Haynes, 2012). Women must navigate this challenge, as they are expected to dress in a way that conforms to ideas about professionalism but is still acceptably feminine. Women's failure to conform with such dress expectations results in negative evaluations not only of their dress, but of their professional competence as well. Even in instances where women's job performance may otherwise be strong, they can face negative evaluations at work because of the ways that they dress (Britton, 2017). The story of Finley, who loses her job during downsizing at the Ice in part because of critiques of her attire, demonstrates a way in which women face an additional benchmark that they must meet that men do not seem to face.

It also cannot be ignored that many of the critiques of women's dress demonstrate a policing of women's sexuality in the workplace. Just as traditional management thinking presumes that organizations are gender neutral, organizations are theorized to be asexual as well (Acker, 1990; Hearns & Parkin, 1987). However, as Brewis and Linstead (2000) and others contend, "sexuality pervades every aspect of organizations" (p. 1). Other research has found that women in certain roles in certain organizations—such as clerical workers in business firms and sport journalists in media companies—are expected to perform a sexualized version of femininity meant to appeal to heterosexual men, including by dressing accordingly in tight clothing, short skirts, or low-cut tops (Harrison, 2019; Rogers & Henson, 1997). At the Ice and the Blades, though, such

reminders of women's sexuality are ruled out of place in the organization. Wearing a too-short dress or forgoing a bra is deemed inappropriate or a distraction. As the Ice's Vic explained, a low-cut top and high-waisted skirt exemplify what a woman should *not* wear—even if what she *should* wear remains unclear. As Acker (1990) wrote, "While women's bodies are ruled out of order, or sexualized and objectified, in work organizations, men's bodies are not" (p. 152). For women at the Ice and Blades, navigating the dress codes means finding clothing that is not only both "professional" and sufficiently comfortable for their jobs but also sufficiently conceals their bodies. These are challenges faced by the women, but not the men, thereby (re)producing the gender divisions within these two organizations.

CHAPTER 6

WORKPLACE RITUALS

Individuals 'do gender' in organizations through performances of masculinities and femininities at work. Prior research has demonstrated ways in which men perform masculinities in workplaces in order to assert status over each other and over women (e.g., Blomberg, 2009; Martin, 2001). Martin's (2001) work, in particular, has examined ways in which two or more men perform masculinities together ('mobilizing masculinities'), identifying ways in which such performances are used to align themselves with each other (affiliative masculinities) and differentiate themselves from other men and women (contesting masculinities). Performances of femininities at work have been less theorized, but van den Brink and Benschop (2014) considered Martin's 'mobilization' framework in their study of 'mobilizing femininities,' in which they find that women 'mobilize femininities' by supporting other women during the job application process. While many studies focus on men's performances of masculinities and women's performances of femininities, any individual may perform both masculinities and femininities, regardless of their biological sex or gender identity. Rather, masculinities refer to traits and activities that have been contextually defined as associated with men and femininities are those that have been contextually defined as associated with women (Byrne et al., 2021; Nentwich & Kelan, 2014; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

In this chapter, I consider these performances of masculinities and femininities within the context of workplace rituals. I use the term 'workplace rituals' to refer to activities in which one or more people participate together and that take place on a recurring basis within organizations. The frequency with which they recur can vary – one

ritual I discuss takes place every day, another once a week, and another on a less regular basis. These rituals are a compelling site to study gender because while all social interactions are local to the time and place in which they occur, the repetition of these rituals communicates their importance to social life in the organizations. Thus, while meanings of gender are produced within these rituals, those meanings matter beyond those moments (Blomberg, 2009). Rituals are one way in which groups, such as organizations, "create and preserve collective identities" (Hermanowicz & Morgan, 1999, p. 197). They communicate values that are important to the group and serve as a way to affirm group membership and establish group boundaries (Hermanowicz & Morgan, 1999, p. 197).

Other research has studied rituals as locations for understanding gender differences and hierarchies. For example, Parker (1988) examined etiquette rituals, noting that such rituals constitute "an institutionalized social performance whose smallest constituent units—or symbols—serve as vehicles for the transmission of socially normative meanings of gender" (p. 374). By communicating that men are stronger or more rational than women, etiquette rituals symbolize gender differences and (re)produce status hierarchies in which men are more powerful than women (Parker, 1988; Reskin, 2000). McGinnis et al. (2008) examined how rituals on the golf course similarly communicate differences between men and women and serve as ways of excluding women from the traditionally masculine domain of golf. Similarly, rituals amongst cadets at the United States Military Academy shape norms and behaviors that align with masculinity, precluding the existence of a 'feminine' cadet (Morgan, 2007).

In the following sections, I share stories of three workplaces rituals that occur at the Ice and the Blades and discuss the associated performances of masculinities and femininities. In the first two stories, a planking challenge and a golf putting competition, performances of athletic masculinity reward the (mostly) men who participate while emphasizing the differences of the (mostly) women who do not. In the third story, women perform femininities in a weekly meeting to discuss a popular reality television show. While this ritual also marks the differences between men and women, non-participation is rewarded, as the (mostly) men who do not attend ridicule the meeting and create their own, more masculine ritual in response. In my analysis, I consider how the rituals foster inclusion and exclusion in the organizations as well as how they (re)produce status and gender hierarchies. Additionally, I connect the performances of masculinities and femininities in these rituals to other gendered practices within the organizations.

The Planking Challenge

One afternoon during my observations at the Ice, I observed—and participated in—a planking[3] challenge with several of the staff members. I was sitting at my designated cubicle, next to the ticket sales "pit" (the native language used to describe the two rows of cubicles where the ticket sales staff works). Mark, the vice president of sales, walked by me, and I heard Sean, a ticket sales account executive who sits at the desk on the other side of my cubicle partition wall, ask him if he wants to "plank." Mark replied sure, and Sean asked a couple of other people in the sales pit if they are planking. Mason,

[3] 'Planking' refers to the act of participating in an exercise called a 'plank,' in which an individual holds themselves in a position with their toes and either their forearms or hands on the floor in order to strengthen the abdomen and back, or 'core,' as well as other muscles of the body (Hill, 2021).

the ticket sales manager, walked over from his desk in the corner behind me and asked if they are planking.

Intrigued to learn more, I walked over to the sales pit, and Mason asked me if I'm planking. I asked what he means. He said that they are doing planks. I saw that Mark has his phone on the floor inside the door of his office, and it was open to a timer. He was kneeling on the floor. I asked if it's a competition to see who can hold it the longest, and Mark replied they just go for a minute. Mason told me it is to get the blood flowing. Sean said they usually do it after their morning jog, and Mason added "after they run suicides" (I sensed that they both might be joking about the running). James, another ticket sales account executive, turned at his desk and asked when they are planking, and Sean said as soon as everyone is ready. Rebecca, the administrative assistant, walked past us through the hallway and Mason asked her if she is going to plank. She said she has no core strength, patting her stomach. She asked me if I'm going to do it, and I replied that I am (having decided my participation would allow me to observe more closely than standing to the side).

Another ticket sales account executive, Vic, stood from his desk and wrote something on the white board at the back of the sales pit. When he returned to the front of the pit, he and several others—all men—got on the floor and into position for forearm planks: Mark in the doorway to his office, Mason in the hallway, and four account executives (James, Sean, Vic, and Martin) in the sales pit. I followed suit and positioned myself in the hallway facing Mason. Mark started the timer. Mason made a comment about his boots not being made for this. A couple of jokes were made about doing the planks, and Mark announced when we are halfway through. Mark counted down: "4, 3, 2,

1." We all lowered from the planks and stood up. I asked if they do that every day. Mark replied, "Not every day." Sean added, "Sometimes we do it more than once a day. Sometimes we do it once every 30 days." I walked back to my cubicle, and Mason said, "It feels good after being done."

This activity, which from explanations of staff members is a regular if not consistent occurrence in the workplace, demonstrates the ways in which one version of masculinity—athleticism—is performed at the Ice. Staff members take a break from their work tasks to participate in the exercise, in full view of others who work in the area as well as anyone who might walk by. Participating in sport and physical activity demonstrates "a particular form of masculinity based on competitiveness, aggression and elements of traditional understandings of the sporting male" (Wellard, 2002, p. 235). Houle et al. (2015) found that men possessing a masculinity ideology are more likely to engage in health-promoting behaviors, including physical activity. More specifically, beliefs that men should avoid femininity and portray toughness were both correlated with physical activity. Such physical activity is perceived by men to demonstrate their manhood and to "look good" (Robertson, 2003). Men sport managers, specifically, have been found to identify toughness as an essential trait for their jobs and portray their prior sport participation as evidence that they possess it (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). Previous research on masculinities in the workplace has also considered how men engage in "masculinity contests" at work, of which one of the dimensions is "strength and stamina," the association of strength with status (Berdahl et al., 2018). By challenging each other to planks at work, such a masculinity contest is performed in full sight. Iacuone (2005) found that men construction workers engage in one-upmanship,

frequently relating to feats of physical strength, in order to prove their masculinity. Though the work performed in the administrative offices of the Ice does not require the same physical labor as construction work, the men still perform masculinity through demonstrations of their strength.

One of the account executives, Martin, explained during an interview how the planking ritual originated:

> I think it started with Mark. He's a, like he'll come in every once in a while, and say 'hey do a one-minute plank, two-minute plank, three-minute plank' and he'd say 'well, let's plank right now' and then 'hey, let's just plank every, let's plank every day, let's try to plank every hour.' So it kinda bounced around to different times in which we planked or did push-ups, some kind of a physical activity, you know kinda get the blood flowing, you know, sitting at the desk can kinda be a little tiring if you're not getting up, just a way to get the blood flowing and...We'll do it for a while and then we'll stop, then we'll get back to it. But it, yeah, it's fun, and...It's a good little thing I think we got going trying to do that a couple times a day.

Martin implies that physical activity is needed to maintain the stamina required to work a desk job. Though men may work jobs that do not require any particular displays of physical strength—as is the case with men working in sales and marketing-oriented roles at the Ice and the Blades—they reconstruct the meanings of their jobs as masculine by associating macho toughness with the ability to work long hours (Cooper, 2000; Leidner, 1993; Reid, O'Neill, & Blair-Joy, 2018).

While the planking requires performances of masculinity, no one—including women—appear to be formally excluded from participating. Mason, the ticket sales manager, asks both Rebecca and me if we will join. Rebecca declines, indicating she does not have the strength for it. I accept the invitation and, as a woman, am able to participate right alongside the men. However, two members of the ticket sales department, Clayton and Finley, remain at their desks during the planking, and no one asks them to join

(perhaps because this is a regular activity, they were already aware of whether they would participate). Clayton, a man, appears to have less slim body type than the other men in the department, though he is a former Division III college football player (on another day, he complains that the football jersey of one of his coworkers, which he is wearing as the result of a bet, is uncomfortably tight). Finley is the department's only woman. She too, with a curvy frame, deviates from the slimmer, athletic body type held by four of the six ticket salespeople, as well as by her manager, Mason, and the vice president, Mark.

Martin connects the lack of participation by some people in the office to their lack of capability: "I think some people just, honestly some people just can't physically do it. I think they just don't work out. So they probably just sit there and make comments that we're doing [it] wrong, you know?"

Certainly, Rebecca's excuse for not joining indicated she did not feel capable. But Martin's explanation leaves out the possibility that people might have other reasons to not join. Women, in particular, may feel like they need to avoid appearing too masculine at work. Previous studies have shown that women feel they must balance femininity with masculinity, particularly when working in professions dominated by men (Bloksgaard, 2011). While women may perform masculinities at work in order to align themselves with men, they often must navigate a "double bind," in which they are penalized for being too masculine but marked as lower status for being too feminine (Kelan & Carr, 2016; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). As a woman myself, I experienced this dilemma as I made the decision of whether I would participate in the planking, especially as I realized I might be the only woman. I thought about the impression my participation would give to

others in the office and how it might change their perceptions of me as a woman in the space. I also worried about whether my own physical capabilities might make me appear weak, should I struggle to hold the plank. While I perform planks in the privacy of my home, I find the exercise physically painful—a sensation which, at home, I can ease by taking a break as needed, but which might signal physical inferiority if I needed to do so in a group setting.

Martin further described who usually participates in the planking:

> Well everyone in that back area, we encourage everybody to do it. Some people are like, 'Hell no, I'm not doing that.' [chuckles] But it's, yeah, whoever wants to do it, like we're not, obviously not forcing anybody. But mostly the sales team and Mark will do it. And when the interns are in the office like we'll say 'Hey, get down here or we're not gonna, you know, sign your papers for credit' or something like that. Kinda messing with them. Most people in the back will do it with us.

From Martin's view, everyone is "encouraged" to join. He stated no one is forced to participate, but two sentences later described how they compel interns to participate through (joking about) threats of punishment. Such threats, even in jest, communicate that while the planking may not be an official requirement, an expectation exists that people should participate. To the interns in particular, college students who are typically new to both the workplace and the industry, the planking becomes a way to demonstrate that they belong.

In other ways, too, performances of athleticism can be seen at the Ice, both during the course of the workday and in the ways that people (men especially) socialize with each other outside of work. For example, while waiting for a staff meeting to begin, Ice staff members hit a soccer ball around the conference room in a game of "hot potato." On multiple occasions during my observations, men hit each other or discussed times when

they had hit each other at work in the past (after one such incident where Sean slapped Greg, the ticket operations account executive, in the groin, Finley announced, “That was the most aggressive interaction I ever saw,” then, referring to me, told the men, “She’s going to think we’re crazy.” Greg responded, “I’m sure it’s not anything she hasn’t seen before,” indicating that he did not find it to be unusual workplace behavior.). Prior research has demonstrated that horseplay is a dimension of masculinity in some workplaces (Iacuone, 2005), and while horseplay can also include verbal jousting and practical jokes, at the Ice, it often surfaced through these physical interactions. Men also mention using the hockey team’s locker room facilities for pre- or post-work workouts, and can be seen wearing their gym clothes and changing their shoes at their desks at the end of the workday. Members of the office sometimes use the arena’s ice rink for some intra-office hockey, again demonstrating how divisions are created between those that play and those that do not, as Martin explains:

> Yeah, you know once in a while we'll get some ice time given to us from the building. So we go out there on the ice, play a little hockey with each other. You know, not everybody plays hockey or knows how to skate but we're still out there, have a good time. If someone messes up, you know just something to kinda bash 'em about later, you know, all in a fun sense.

Additionally, planned employee bonding events revolve around participating in physical activities or attending sporting events. Just as sport participation is associated with masculinity, so too is sport fandom—research has found that masculinity is a better predictor of sport fandom than biological sex (Wann et al., 2004). Though many women identify as sport fans, it is “commonly understood that sport fandom is a male activity” and women fans often feel marginalized (Hoeber & Kerwin, 2013, p. 328). The organization of employee events around sport activities, whether participatory or

spectator in nature, promotes values associated with masculinity. For example, as part of the team's holiday party, staff members race go-karts, complaining afterward of how sore they are. The prize for the party's "ugly sweater contest" is tickets to an NHL hockey game (and the night off work from working the team's own game). The team organizes a group night for staff at one of the team's away games. Tickets to other sporting events are offered up as sales incentives for the ticket staff. Employees (again, primarily men) place bets on various sporting events with each other. On one day, three of the men in the ticket sales department are wearing football jerseys over their work clothes as a result of wagers they lost with their colleagues. As a sport business, it is perhaps not surprising that such socializing at work is built around sport. But the interweaving of sport into the business of sport—where being neither an athlete nor fan is inherently necessary for doing one's job—reinforces norms about the ideal worker. Other industries have similarly linked cultural associations with ideal worker norms. For example, Miller (2004) found that the oil industry in Canada was interwoven with the culture of the frontier and ranching, so that managers described ideal workers as embodying that culture, referring to "gunslinger[s]" and people possessing a "macho Western image" (p. 59). Likewise, in sport, ideas about athleticism, strength, and fandom characterize teams' ideal workers (Joseph & Anderson, 2016; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008).

Men also talk about how playing sport is important to their relationships outside of work. For instance, Greg discussed how he and his supervisor, Mason, share a background in baseball, saying "him and I bond over that all the time." While prior research has tied men's talk of sport and attendance at sporting events within work contexts to informalism, the shared interests and values through which men bond and

network (Collinson & Hearn, 2001; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2005), at the Ice this extends to playing sports as well. Men's friendships, including those at work, are often built around participation in competitive activities (Messner, 1992). Men use such activities as a means of informal networking, which often benefits their career mobility (Mickey, 2018). Mason, the ticket sales manager, shared that he plays on a softball team with one of his supervisees, Martin, and the team's merchandise manager, Scott. Martin and Greg, the ticket operations account executive, both described growing up playing baseball together. Vic and Clayton played on the same college football team. Women, too, are involved with sports and athletics outside of work, but these are not activities that they participate in alongside their coworkers. During an office conversation, Finley mentioned a game she was playing in over the weekend, prompting a man in the office to suggest she wear eye black. Hannah, the director of finance and human resources, is active as a judge for gymnastics competitions—though she is not a participant herself, and gymnastics is considered to be a feminine sport, despite the level of strength and physical fitness that sport demands (Koivula, 2001).

That much of the staff is active in sport is not by chance. Carl, the Ice's president, described how they define athletes as ideal workers, particularly in sales:

> But what we found was that there were certain traits that really, that led to success, right? So we found that like athletes, former college athletes really excelled at sales. So we tried to kinda narrow our focus after we realize that, to getting some former athletes in here because they had all the kind of traits that we wanted, you know? Like they're used to a structure, they're used to working hard and kind of, you know, going through hard things. So we focused on that.

In fact, the three most recent hires in the ticket sales department—Vic, James, and Clayton—all played college football. Vic described how he felt his football experience qualified him for the job:

> So I think for football, you know, it's a very, it's a tough sport to play in college. People just think it's practice and then you play the games. But throughout the week during our season, we'd have three lifts, we've had five to six meetings, we'd have five practices and then walkthroughs, so you're putting in, you know, 50 to 60 hours before the actual game comes around. […] So it creates a structure I guess, and necessarily a work ethic. And that's kinda what working in sports is like too. You need that, you need a strong work ethic, and you need to be able to buckle down and some weeks where there's big budgets, be able to a few weeks in advance prep for that. Get what you need to get in and help the team, help our business team here get to the revenue goal.

He also described how his coachability and ability to be motivated, other traits he perceived gaining from football, are an asset in his role, drawing the analogy between the coach-player and manager-employee relationships:

> As in similar aspects on the football field, the coach would tell an athlete to do something, how to do it, when to do it, and then the athlete would perform what needed to be done. […]And so very similar kind of mindset mentality. And we see here in the office too. And, like, I know James, he played at freaking Florida State you know, he knows better than anyone else. It's hard work and kinda what we see here all the time. It's just hard work that needs to be put in to get a good reward.

From Vic's perspective, required traits—like work ethic and coachability—are demonstrated through past football experience. He associates James' ability to do the job with his playing experience, suggesting that James "knows better" because he did not just play football, but played at a successful Division I program. In this way, former athletic experience becomes part of the definition of the ideal worker at the Ice (Mickey, 2018).

While women certainly may have athletic experience as well, hiring managers tend to specifically value men's, not women's, team sport experience as demonstrating desirable business traits (Joseph & Anderson, 2016). Thus, the Ice say they hire "athletes," but in actuality hire "football players"—men who play a sport that is socially constructed as masculine (Koivula, 2001). Similar to what Turco (2010) found in

leverage buy-out firms, the "emphasis on sports and its ideal worker appear mutually sustaining" (p. 905).

The Golf Putting Contest

The second workplace ritual is a golf putting competition that takes place almost daily in the ticket sales department of the Ice. The Ice's ticket sales manager, Mason, offers the golf putting competition as a work performance incentive to the sales staff, which includes five account executives (all men) and one senior account executive (a woman). On the mornings on which the competition takes place, Mason sets out a box with a tube serving as hole at one end of the hallway and then places several prizes (such as gift cards) on the floor along the hallway, at varying distances from the hole. For every 15 calls each member of the sales staff makes by a designated time, they get to take a putt while standing next to the prize of their choice. If they make the putt, they win the prize. Below, I describe one such morning on which the putting competition happened, as captured in my fieldnotes:

> Mason sets up the golf putting game along the hallway. Once it is set up, James [account executive, man] lines up and adjusts his stance to take a putt in front of me. His first putt is too soft and stops short. His second shot is harder, but rolls to the side.
>
> James: "Aaah I shifted it too much."
>
> Martin [account executive, man]: "Mason doesn't want us to win anymore."
>
> Vic [account executive, man] gets up next, taking time to adjust his stance and align his shot before taking a single putt, which also rolls to the side.
>
> Mason: "You guys have to hit this line."
>
> He motions at a line on the carpet.

From this account, one can see how seriously the men take the activity. James and Vic both align their bodies as if they are taking a putt out on the golf course, shimmying their hips back and forth and positioning their feet just so. They analyze their shots and make adjustments. Mason points out a characteristic of the hallway carpet the way golfers on the course might examine the green. The putting contest continues:

> Rebecca [administrative assistant, woman] walks by and asks: "Can I try?"
>
> She takes a putt, which is short and hits the wall.
>
> A white woman with short blonde hair then walks by. A man's voice from the ticket sales pit yells: "Celebrity shot!"
>
> The woman takes the golf club and takes a putt, which misses.
>
> Finley [senior account executive, woman]: "Good job, Chloe!"
>
> Carl [team president, man] comes out of his office, and I see him give the woman, Chloe, a kiss, and I realize she must be his wife.

This portion of the contest demonstrates how women—even women who are not part of the ticket sales department, as neither Rebecca nor Chloe are—are not excluded from the ritual. Yet their participation is marked as different. Rebecca's question of "Can I try?" seems to indicate that putting is not something she can do, but that she is asking permission to attempt. Meanwhile, the participation by Chloe—who as both a woman and a non-employee is doubly an outsider—is treated as a spectacle by the sales staff.

After Chloe's putts, the three remaining men in the ticket sales department (Martin, Clayton, and Sean) each take their one or two putts, which proceed similarly to the earlier putts by James and Vic, with each man taking time to line up their putts but missing. One of Clayton's shots rolls to a stop right in front of the hole, the closest of any of the putts I observe, but produces only a mild reaction from his colleagues. Carl, the

team president, also takes two putts. Though he is not a member of the ticket sales department and therefore not an official entrant in the contest, no one remarks on his participation as they did for his wife, nor does he ask permission to putt, as did Rebecca.

After all five of her department colleagues have taken their putts, the sole woman in the ticket sales department takes her turn:

> Finley gets up to putt, and takes her shot from the furthest prize near the end of the hallway—the men had all taken their shots closer, near the midpoint of the hallway. She takes an aggressive putt that is both not on target and too hard. As she walks back toward her desk, casually swinging the golf club around, she says to me, "As you can tell I do not play golf…At least it went further today." She seems to play off her lack of skill as if it does not matter to her.
>
> After Finley's putt, Mason picks up the prizes from floor.

As with Rebecca and Chloe, Finley's performance in the putting competition marks her as different than the men. Where they were serious, she was cavalier. She appears to delay her participation to the last possible moment, going last, after the rest of the office's attention has started to move away from the game. Cognizant of my observation of her attempt, she verbally explains her lack of skill and indicates this particular performance was (to use a golf pun) par for the course.

As an activity, golf—and putting in particular—does not require a skill that is particularly masculine. Yet it is a sport that has historically been the domain of men (Ceron-Anaya, 2010; Crosset, 1995). While many women play golf, McGinnis et al. (2008) contend that rules, accommodations, and systems in golf—such as closer tees—serve to mark women as "other," thereby reifying gender differences. They contend that "[b]ecause established golf rituals are simultaneously part of playing golf and part of creating masculinity, women face a double bind in golf" (p. 22). The differences between men and women's relationship to golf can be seen in the way that men and women

approach the putting contest. The men take it seriously, as though they are on the golf course. They take time to line up their shots, and make adjustments between putts. They discuss their strategies about which prize they are aiming for. They consider features of the carpet, analyzing their own and others' previous shots for insights. They adjust their stances, shuffling their weight back and forth from leg to leg (hips, knees, feet), much as the professional golfers do on tour. When the women participate, they do so "for fun." Rebecca, the team's administrative assistant, asks if she can "try." The team president's wife walks through during the contest and takes a putt, much to the delight of her audience. When Finley, the only woman actually eligible to formally participate in the contest, takes her putt, she makes a joke of it. While these women are included in the golf putting competition, the ritual marks them as different than men.

The golf putting competition has been a ritual throughout the Ice's history, though Mason described how he had instituted the golf putting competition as a daily activity for the staff after he was promoted to ticket sales manager the previous year:

> I've done it a long time ago and a lot of teams do...many sports teams do putting for gifts and everything. So we, it's been a back and forth thing and I wanted to make it a solid everyday activity. So that was on me. I started to reach out to businesses and do a couple of trades of like tickets for gift cards so that we could really have some good prizes, and make it an everyday thing 'cause we've done it in the past like when I was a rep and then we would not do it [for] months on end. So I wanted to make sure I did it every single day and they knew if they made their calls, they would get to putt for prizes.

He shared how the competition motivated one of the account executives:

> But I would, you know, I put a prize for two lift passes for a local ski mountain all the way down the hallway and Sean nailed it. And like he really wanted, he's probably the only one in the pit that snowed or ski-board--or snowboarded or skied. So he really wanted those passes. And I made him work for it. And he was making 45, 50 calls a day so he could have three putts to try and win that prize.

From Mason's perspective, the putting contest is something that is motivating to the whole staff. Discussing it during an interview, he said, "But when it comes to motivation, like you saw, we started doing the putting, which they all really like whether they're good at golf or not, they really look forward to the putting." In his view it is a gender neutral practice. But during my observations, it was apparent that Finley was not experiencing the contest in the same way that the men did. If the golf putting contest is working as Mason intends it and pushing the account executives to make more calls for the reward of taking putts, how is Finley motivated if she is less enthused about the activity and less confident in her chances of winning a prize? And if more calls translate into more sales—a measure of job performance for the account executives as well as a source of income in their commission-based roles—how is Finley's performance affected by her less enthusiastic participation? The organization is offering a tangible reward for demonstrating a skill that has socially been defined as masculine. As Mason said: "The putting again celebrates the success in putting in the daily work that turns into sales. So that's, you know, I would say that's celebrating success in just our daily activities." If the putting is a symbol of success in the Ice's office, Finley seems left out of the celebration.

Beyond its purpose as a sales incentive, the golf putting competition also signals the importance of golf to the culture and social relationships at the Ice. As Finley noted after her putt, "I do not play golf." Yet for the men at the Ice, and in the ticket sales department in particular, golf is a popular activity. So engrained is golfing in the Ice's workplace that Vic describes the dress code as "golf," referring to the slacks, polos, and pullovers that the staff wears. At many workplaces, men socialize and network through golf, with the activity giving them access to both clients and career progressions (Miller,

2004; Sang et al., 2014). The link between golf and business dates to at least the early 20th century, with prominent business people (men) enjoying the game. The structure of the game allowed participants to build social relationships and discuss business matters, due to its time and pace, while the handicap rule enabled people of differing abilities to play together (Ceron-Anaya, 2010). In addition, golf has become a metaphor for business, with "similar characteristics in both activities, such as risk taking, calculation, analysis, trust, losses, and saving" (Ceron-Anaya, 2010, p. 352).

At the Ice, several of the men describe golfing with each other outside of work. During an interview, James shared that he and two of the other men in the ticket sales department had golfed with Carl, the team president, the previous Friday. Three of the account executives—Vic, Sean, and Martin—took a five-day out-of-state golfing trip together. Martin explained in his interview the role that golf plays in building relationships in the office:

> There's a couple of people that hate golf, that wouldn't pick up a club even if their life depended on it, but I'd say outside of that, with like those individuals, golf is a big component on what brings a lot of us together, you know, able to talk about. But for those individuals, there's still a lot of a lot of commonalities. So they're not like left out of place and... it still, it's kinda like that rivalry talk, like Yankees and Red Sox, sort of the golfer and non-golfer, and kind of banter that can go back and forth as well.

Vic echoed the importance of socializing outside of work for building workplace relationships, often through golfing:

> And I think it's important that I work with a few of these people and I don't mind doing things outside of the office with them. Like I don't get sick of them and they're not sick of me, I guess. You know, we can go out, grab a bite to eat or, go out, go play a round of golf or go to [golf trip location] for a week, and could all, you know, we can all still work together and coordinate everything.

When golf is used as a site for building relationships in the workplace, whether outside of the office on the golf course or inside of the office with the putting competition, those who do not golf will be excluded from these critical status-building opportunities. The ticket sales manager, team president, and at least four of the five men in the ticket sales department golf and golf together. Not only is Finley the one woman in the department, but she, through virtue of not golfing, is denied the opportunities to socialize with her colleagues in this way. Women—particularly those in sales roles—face disadvantages in informal, out-of-office socializing, where 'heterosocial' events like restaurants and bars make them the targets of gossip and harassment, and 'homosocial' events like golfing formally exclude them (Morgan & Martin, 2006). While not all men at the Ice golf, men who do not (such as Kurt, the corporate sales director) have other socializing opportunities available to them. As Vic says of Kurt, "Me and him kinda do our own thing together." But for women like Finley, not participating in golf adds to the list of activities from which they are formally or informally excluded.

The Reality Television Show Meeting

The third workplace ritual occurs at the Blades, where each week women gather in the office of Marilyn, the senior director of corporate sales and, positionally, the most senior woman in the organization, to talk about the previous night's episode of *The Bachelor*, a popular U.S. reality show that involves a man simultaneously dating a number of women with the intention of choosing one of them as his wife. Marilyn explained why she started the weekly ritual:

> So there's a huge age gap, lifestyle, socioeconomic positioning, experience between myself and most of the other females in that office. Okay. I'm okay with that. And I stay working 'cause I think it keeps you young at heart and alive. And I enjoy it. I'm good at it, and I need the money. Okay? But aside from that, I don't

> have a lot of friends at that office. Like someone I would call and say, 'Hey, you want to go to a movie with.' I just don't. That dynamic is not there any longer. But I manage these people, they look to me, and I spend a lot of time with these people. So I had to find a way to connect to this group and build a rapport and a trust. So, and this is goofy, but it worked. That's why I started watching *The Bachelor.* And it was a way to connect with my daughter. We have fun with it and watch it every Monday night, have quesadillas and like built a routine. Well, I started making the conversation with the other people and finding out they were intrigued with it. And Hollie [marketing coordinator] and Bailey [graphic designer], and it became a Tuesday morning meeting to recap what happened in the show. Totally not related to work at all. Probably border HR-inappropriate on some of the conversations. But so is the show.

Marilyn uses the meeting about *The Bachelor* to build social relationships with other women in the office, who as she notes are much younger than herself (Marilyn is in her 50s and the other women are in their 20s). While she started watching the show to connect with her own daughter, she also found that it allowed her to connect with the young women at work. She intentionally created a workplace ritual in order to build rapport and trust with them. She shared the example of Bianca, the team's merchandise manager, to demonstrate how the other women felt about this ritual:

> To the point that Bianca didn't watch [the] show, didn't know anything about it. But was feeling excluded from the females getting together in the office. […] Bianca binge-watched the entire season, in like two or three days. Literally. Every episode. And went on the Wikipedia resources I sent her. And so when the last one came up, we're like, 'Oh, we'll have our meeting,' she goes, 'I'm in.' We're like, 'No, you haven't caught up. We can't have you in the meeting.' She goes, 'I watched every single episode, I am caught up.' That girl got so excited. She pulled a chair in, she came in, she shut the door, she propped herself. Like she made it to the table.

Bianca's excitement of being able to finally participate in this ritual demonstrates how her lack of initial interest in the show had left her feeling excluded. She changed her behavior to be able to become part of the group.

However, it is noteworthy that only the women in the office participated in the meetings. As with the planking, no one was formally excluded, but the decision to participate fell mainly along gender lines. As Marilyn explained:

> And men were invited. They were just all like, well, 'that's a bullshit show,' you know? 'It's stupid.' Daniel's [chief revenue officer] like, 'Close your door, I don't want to hear anything about this.' But I think he saw the dynamic of what I was doing. So he didn't, it wasn't like, 'Okay, shut it down.'

Though the men did not participate in *The Bachelor* meetings—and were openly derisive of them—Marilyn suggests that was not an indication that they were not interested in the show:

> But we did find out they have their own polls and they were watching it closet and they just weren't gonna admit it. Yeah, like they're like, 'I'm not gonna be part of that. That's stupid.' But in reality, like, I think George [account executive] had online picks [bets on who would win]. But I'm like, really? Come on. They're like, 'Oh, no, no.'

Watching *The Bachelor*—and gathering with others to discuss it—appears to have been defined as a feminine activity within the Blades office. It is something that men do, but cannot admit to others. While women often must navigate a balance between masculinities and femininities at work, men tend to avoid any association with femininities in order to prevent their masculinity from being questioned (Bloksgaard, 2011; Cross & Bagihole, 2002; Hall, 1993; Murray, 1996; Williams, 1989).

One woman at the Blades, Gina, the team's marketing director, also chooses not to join the other women for the meetings. As Gina related:

> So literally every Tuesday, there would be a meeting in Marilyn's office early in the morning so all the girls can talk about *The Bachelor*. I'm not joking, they would go in there and discuss and have a review of *The Bachelor*. And those of us like me, and...who else? And like Tom [director of media relations]...me and the boys, I realize now. [laughs]. Me and the boys didn't really care about *The Bachelor*, so we would go in Daniel's office and talk about hockey.

Not only do the men (and Gina) decline participating in *The Bachelor* meetings, but they also create their own counter-meeting to discuss sports. In this way, *The Bachelor* ritual, which involves performances of femininity, is markedly different than the planking and golf putting at the Ice, which involved performances of masculinity. At the Ice, the non-participants did not create their own counter-activity in response. They either sat on the sidelines or participated in liminal ways. But when the ritual involves performances of femininity, the non-participants respond by creating their own activity that involves performances of masculinity; that is, talking about sports.

Marilyn also comments on Gina not participating in the meeting: "Because the only one that doesn't participate is Gina and she mocks, she makes fun of it. But she even will come in and chit chat or be like, 'Okay, well, I guess it's *The Bachelor* time now, whatever.'" Gina's mocking, just like the men Marilyn says call the show "stupid," shows how beyond the lack of participation and the creation of a counter-meeting, Gina and the men—all the way up to the chief revenue officer, who told Marilyn to close the door so he did not have to hear—are derisive of the ritual. Thus, while the meeting may have been successful in creating the rapport and trust among women in the office that Marilyn desired, it came at a social cost to the women at the same time. Performances of femininities by women at work—or as van den Brink and Benshop (2014) deemed them, "mobilizing femininities"—come with the risk of scrutiny by others, men in particular, in ways that performances of masculinities by men do not (Kalen & Carr, 2016; van den Brink and Benshop, 2014).

Indeed, Gina's choice to not participate may serve to align her more closely with the men in the office and distance her from the women. She explains the difficulties she sees in working with women:

> It's really hard, especially at our end of the office-- and this is gonna sound like so gross to say, it's very hard to work with like an excess number of women in one space. [laughs] I will say that, like 'til the end of my days, is that I find it's a lot harder to work with women because we have so many social and speech specificities that we use that like sometimes things can be interpreted very different. For example, when I work with Ted [corporate activation coordinator] in the social [media] space, he's very direct and to the point and he doesn't like interpret or read anything into what I'm saying. With girls, I feel like very often, any like, tonal shift I have, or anything that I say can be interpreted a little differently because we are creatures who tend to like, analyze a lot more, which is both a good and a bad thing.

Gina goes on to relate the types of issues that she sees Ted having with the women she supervises:

> He's like, 'Oh my God, you guys are being gossipy, blah, blah, blah, like I don't like that.' I'm like, 'Ted, they're not trying to gossip with you. They're just trying to get it off their chest. A lot of women are very vocal creatures. Like sometimes when we say something, we immediately feel better. Like, they're not trying to complain or start office drama. They're just trying to like use you as a sounding board. You don't even have to respond. You can just say 'okay,' and they're still going to feel better about having said it.' But like that always rubs him the wrong way, and he'll like, snap at them for it and be like 'Oh my God, you're so dramatic.' And it makes them feel almost guilty or worse about sharing their feelings. So it then creates like a tense environment and that you know can grow. So sometimes I'm like, 'Okay, is this something like you actually need to be mad at them for or no?' So I find that like that's a lot of what it is in terms of like Ted getting irritated with us, especially because Ted sits right between you know, Annie [corporate activation coordinator], Bailey, and Bianca and Hollie. [laughs] And me.

Ted, it seems, gets irritated with women in the office for talking, gossiping, and sharing feelings—the very activities that are encouraged during *The Bachelor* meetings.

Gina further explained the dynamics of her relationships with the four people she supervises—two men, Barret [video production manager] and Ryan [mascot coordinator], and two women, Hollie and Bailey:

> So it's really interesting because with that mix, it almost becomes like, it's with us specifically in marketing, it seems that like the gender doesn't even matter. It 100% seems to be almost personality based and generational. I find that Barrett and I unite a lot in terms of like disagreements or like positioning in our department. It's like and then Hollie and Bailey kind of unite together and Ryan is almost always on his own island. So it's funny, we joke about Ryan being on his own island, but he literally is, on every topic, ever. On rare occasions, Ryan and I unite against everyone else, but that's few and far between. And I'm the only other person who does. So anytime we're having a discussion or if I'm having issues with my staff or if I'm just like, being rubbed the wrong way, 90% of the time, it will never be Barrett. I think Barrett and I work well together, we communicate effectively, we have a lot in common, and we just seem to work the same way and have the same thought process. A lot of the time, it's funny because I'm way closer to Hollie and Bailey in age than I am Barrett, but I find like, our wants, desires and like what we care about just are so different from the two of them that I can't even relate [laughs].

Gina notes that she finds herself in alignment with the two men in the office, especially Barrett, who hierarchically holds the second highest ranking position in marketing. The two other women, holding two of the three entry-level positions, are aligned together. However, Gina does not seem to think this is related to gender. When things move outside her department, however, her perspective shifts:

> So I find that in our department specifically, it's personality-based, but then when you look at the office as a whole, it does on occasion tend to be like boys versus girls. Ted and I a lot of time work really well together because we're both very direct and kinda the same in that regard. But anytime he's having issues like with my department, it's always like, I don't think he even realizes. It seems to me underlying gender issues. And I will always defend Hollie and Bailey. I'm like they're not being whiny and they're not being [inaudible]. Like, these are actual concerns that are bothering them and you need to understand that [laughs].

Gina does not see her own issues with Hollie and Bailey as relating to gender, but when Ted has issues with them, she recognizes it as a gender issue. Certainly, Gina, Hollie, and

Bailey all identify as women, and so Gina may be unable to perceive a conflict related to gender amongst a same-gender group the way she can when a man (Ted) clashes with women. But Gina is performing gender in a way that allows her to work harmoniously with the men in her office. She has the "same thought process" and "work[s] the same way" as Barrett. She is "very direct" like Ted, drawing a contrast between the rational masculine behavior that she and Ted embody, and the emotional feminine behavior practiced by Hollie and Bailey. Her choice to not participate in *The Bachelor* meetings, too, and instead talk hockey with "the boys," is an example of her performing gender in a way that benefits her in the workplace.

As Claringbould and Knoppers (2012) observed of some women board members of sport governing boards, she is behaving like "one of the boys" (p. 412) to align herself with the men she works with. And it may in fact work to elevate her social status in the workplace. Gina—one of seven director or senior directors at the Blades—is one of two individuals (the other being Dave, the ticket sales director) who numerous people point to as having the ear of Daniel, the chief revenue officer, with whom Gina says she has a "great relationship." In contrast, Marilyn, who as a senior director is the second highest ranking individual working in the Blades' offices, does not garner that same status with Daniel. As discussed in Chapter 4, Marilyn often clashes with her department's director, Bob, in regard to direction and decision making, and Daniel supports Bob, not Marilyn, in these conflicts.

Though Gina perceives herself as working well with Barrett, Barrett shared frustrations with the ways that the women in his department—including Gina—would socialize during meetings:

> I mean, it's like sometimes they'll go off on a tangent, and I'm over there like, I've got stuff to do or I want to do, I don't want to hear about *The Bachelor* or whatever. I don't want to go on some tangent that's not going to get us anywhere. So sometimes I have to go 'Hey, guys, are we wrapped up? Do we have our marching orders?'

During our interview, Barrett specifically referenced a meeting that I had attended, in which the women in his department discussed fashion for several minutes before the meeting began while he, the only man in the room, sat silently (that conversation is described in Chapter 5). He sees this type of talk as unrelated to and therefore getting in the way of work. However, during my field work, I observe him in another meeting having a lengthy conversation about sporting events unrelated to work with two other men in the organization—while the three women in the room simultaneously were having a conversation related to work. Martin (2001) found that women feel frustrated with men's social talk at work, which men see as a part of doing work but women see as wasting time. But in the context of the Blades' marketing meetings, where women outnumber the men by as much as four to one, the roles are reversed: Barrett sees the women's talk about topics that are feminine and not of interest to him as a waste of time, even though he demonstrates similar behaviors in other contexts. Talk of sports is acceptable; talk of fashion or reality television is not.

Barrett's assessment of 'women's talk' illustrates another way in which rituals like *The Bachelor* meeting and other workplace interactions between women can be fraught with negative outcomes even as they build relationships between the women. Such performances of femininity may be doing positive work in creating important feelings of belongingness among women working in an industry traditionally dominated by men. Marilyn specifically comments on how *The Bachelor* meetings improved her

relationships with the other women in the office, and how, following the conclusion of the most recent season, she was looking for another bonding ritual with which to replace it. She said, “Before...some of those people wouldn't come talk to me. They were like, ‘Oh, I don't know. I mean, what is she going to say?’ Or ‘I made, I screwed up, is she gonna be angry?’ Now they realize I'm human with them. And it was very important.” But though the women may be forming bonds that allow them to work well together and even build their own “old girls’ club” at work, research has shown that such women’s networks lack the same influence and power compared to the “old boys’ club” (Shaw, 2006). Formal women’s networks, in fact, may reinforce gender segregation rather than promote gender equity in organizations, as Mickey (2018) found was the case with a women’s networking group at a high tech firm. While performing femininities offer a way for the women at the Blades to build social capital with each other, they do so at a cost of their social capital with men, including those that hold positions of power in the organization.

Conclusion

These three workplace rituals demonstrate ways that performances of masculinities and femininities at work can foster inclusion and exclusion in the office and (re)produce a gender hierarchy in which men and masculinities are higher status than women and femininities. That these rituals are organized and endorsed by leaders of the organizations—a vice president initiates the planking, a sales manager promotes the putting, and a senior director organizes *The Bachelor* meetings—furthers their importance to the meanings of social life in the organizations. While the rituals were created with the intention to improve the workplace—to increase energy, incentivize

work performance, and build rapport, respectively—they simultaneously (re)produced meanings of gender that furthered divisions between men and women at work.

Of note, the first two stories, demonstrating performances of masculinities, take place at the Ice, while the third story, demonstrating performances of femininities, takes place at the Blades. I do not suggest that the Blades do not have workplace rituals built around performances of masculinities—in fact, the hockey meeting that formed in opposition to *The Bachelor* meeting, while not the focus of analysis in this chapter, is one such example. In addition, staff at the Blades engaged in sport talk and discussed organized employee bonding initiatives built around sporting activities, such as broomball. But the Blades did seem to lack rituals involving physical displays of masculinity that occurred within the workplace like the planking and putting at the Ice. It is possible that such rituals occur at the Ice but not at the Blades because of differences between the two organizations. As Dellinger (2004) wrote, "organizational culture shapes the ways that men do masculinity at work" (p. 562). The more professional, bureaucratic setting and structures of the Blades, as discussed in Chapter 4, are not necessarily less masculine than the more informal setting and structures of the Ice—but performances of masculinities may look different within these contexts.

I also cannot confirm that no workplace rituals involving performances of femininities exist at the Ice, though none were observed during the course of this study. Given the few number of women at the Ice (and, as discussed in Chapter 4, their dispersion across job functions and physical space and their concentration in the lowest rungs of the organizational chart), such rituals may be lacking or be less visible in the everyday work environment. The Blades not only employ a greater number of women,

but those women occupy more leadership positions and are also condensed into one area of the offices, which, as discussed above, played a role in the development of *The Bachelor* meetings and other performances of gender in the organization.

The planking and putting rituals at the Ice contribute to gender inequality in the organization. Excluding women from everyday interactions, such as through rituals like putting and planking as well as other socialization involving sports, golf, and other physical activity, structures work as masculine (Miller, 2004). While the women in the office were not formally excluded from participation in these rituals, they must navigate a work environment which is defined as masculine while still 'doing gender' as women. Prior studies have found that men in "feminine" jobs construct their masculine identities by participating in more masculine tasks (such as those requiring physical strength) and avoiding more feminine tasks (such as those demonstrating nurturing) (Cross & Bagihole, 2002; Hall, 1993; Murray, 1996; Williams, 1989). Women in sport organizations may be constructing their feminine identities by avoiding participating in masculine rituals like the planking challenge and golf putting competition.

Beyond determining social status in the organization, when rituals such as the golf putting contest are used to incentivize sales performance, they can have consequences for employees' professional performance as well. As discussed, Finley, as the sole woman in the ticket sales department at the Ice, experienced the putting contest much differently than the men she worked with. Her manager, Mason, viewed the contest as a gender neutral practice that was motivating all of his supervisees' performances, but Finley took the contest less seriously and emphasized her lack of experience in playing golf. Especially in sales roles, where performance is based on sales results and income is at

least partly determined by sales commission, incentives that reward performances of masculinities advantage those who are able to perform them.

The finding that men develop social relationships, which give them access to career success, mobility, status, and power, through their interest and participation in sport, and in particular golfing, is not new. Such activities are key to network-building for men, though they do not necessarily recognize it as such (Mickey, 2018). But other studies which have examined how women are disadvantaged by sport in the workplace start from the assumption that many women are not personally interested in sport. Sometimes, they discuss how women intentionally learn about sports or take up golf in order to gain access to this 'man's world' (Miller, 2004; Turco, 2010). The present study, however, takes place inside two professional sport organizations. Many of the women working for these organizations studied sport management in college and were once athletes themselves. Some still play sport. They have sought careers in the sport industry. Yet sport and athleticism remain tied to men and masculinities in ways that disadvantage women even in such a setting. This may be because, despite their interest and experience in sports, in the workplace, again, women are 'doing gender' in ways that maintain their femininities. For example, while women athletes may be able to benefit professionally in the same ways as men athletes, doing so requires them to navigate and pushback against expected complementary, heterosexual femininity (Hamilton, 2014).

Meanwhile, my analysis shows that the performances of femininities associated with *The Bachelor* ritual at the Blades function much differently than the performances of masculinities associated with the planking and the putting at the Ice. While all three rituals (re)produce gender differences in the organizations, they also (re)produce the same

gender hierarchy. Those who do not participate—or participate less fully— in the planking and putting mark themselves as different and less than the people who participate. Those who do not participate in *The Bachelor* meeting also mark themselves as different, but superior, to the people that participate. While men are excluded (or exclude themselves) from *The Bachelor* meeting, they do not suffer from this and create their own counter ritual through a meeting to discuss sports. Women may be the ones who suffer from their participation, as the ritual is made fun of by men, including the highest ranking individual in the office. While the meeting fosters rapport and trust among women, it does nothing to improve their status in the organization and may even harm gender equality by (re)producing the existing gender hierarchy (Mickey, 2018). Van den Brink and Benschop (2014) contend that 'mobilizing femininities'—performances of femininities between two or more women—are only partly successful at eliminating gender inequalities in organizations, because they are met with scrutiny by both men and women and because while they may sometimes lead to short-term increased gender diversity, they do not change the gender norms and practices in organizations that are necessary for long-term success. This appears to be the case at the Blades. In addition, whereas the planking and putting rituals also connected to ways that people (men) socialized outside of the workplace and to ways that sport is used formally by the organizations for employee bonding and rewards, *The Bachelor* meeting was confined to its own context. Marilyn, the senior director who organized the meeting, even mentions how she does not have relationships with her colleagues outside of work.

This chapter has demonstrated how performances of masculinities and femininities (re)produce a gender hierarchy at the Ice and the Blades (Nentwich & Kelan,

2014). With the 'feminization' of management, Lewis (2014) called for more examinations of how femininities are included, rather than excluded from organizations. But at the Blades and the Ice, it is clear that masculinities are still a source of inclusion and femininities a means for exclusion. Research often conflates men with masculinities and women with femininities, but any individual may perform both (Halberstam, 1998; Sang et al., 2014). As discussed, Gina, the Blades' marketing director, is able to perform masculinities in ways that align her with men in the office and help elevate her status. However, women must navigate both 'doing masculinities' and 'doing femininities' at work, which often creates a double bind in which they can be neither too masculine nor too feminine (Shaw, 2006). Men, meanwhile, avoid most performances of femininity at work—even when, as in the case of the men at the Blades who watch *The Bachelor*, such activities align with their own interests. Likewise, masculine norms can constrain not just women, but men too (Billing, 2011; Byrnes et al, 2021). In the planking challenge at the Ice, two members of the ticket sales department do not participate: the sole woman, Finley, but also a man, Clayton, whose body type deviates from those of the other men is his department. As I will discuss in the next chapter, this may affect both of their positionings in the organization's social hierarchy, which is evoked by management as they make decisions about who to keep and let go when the organization experiences downsizing.

CHAPTER 7

GENDERED HIERARCHIES, GENDERED DOWNSIZINGS

In Chapter 4, I described the positional hierarchies of the Ice and the Blades, noting how men—particularly at the Ice—are more likely to hold leadership positions. I also discussed how certain roles in the organizations tend to be filled by men and women, such as sales and service respectively. Chapters 5 and 6, however, reveal that men and women's status in the organizations is far more complex than job titles, but is constructed through social practices such as dress and workplace rituals that (re)produce gender hierarchies. In this chapter, I further consider the complexity of status in these two organizations by examining their multiple hierarchies. Rather than a single hierarchy based on job title, the organizations are composed of multiple hierarchies—including those based on tenure, performance, department, and social relationships—that determine employees' status and guide organizational decision making.

The importance of these hierarchies became clear midway through my research, after the COVID-19 pandemic arrives in the United States, bringing the sport industry to a halt. Both teams experience a downsizing of approximately 40 percent of their staff within the first two months of the pandemic—through layoffs at the Ice, and furloughs at the Blades. When managers at both organizations describe how they decided who to let go and who to keep, they evoke one or more of these organizational hierarchies. Which hierarchies are evoked—and how those hierarchies are gendered—leads to varied outcomes between the two organizations. While the Blades' experience a slight decrease in gender diversity (40.91% to 35.71%), at the Ice, the impact on gender diversity is stark, decreasing from 26.32% to 9.09%.

In this chapter, I first provide an overview of the downsizing decisions at the two organizations. I then discuss how managers made these decisions by evoking multiple organizational hierarchies, which were gendered in different ways. Lastly, I consider the conditions that led to different outcomes of gendered downsizing at the Ice versus the Blades.

Layoffs and Furloughs During COVID-19

On March 11 and 12, 2020, numerous sport organizations around the United States announced the cancellation or indefinite suspensions of their seasons, tournaments, and events in the wake of the COVID-19 global health pandemic. This stoppage, and the uncertainty surrounding when live sporting events would return, brought immediate financial consequences for the industry. Economic losses from high-profile national sporting and other live events cancelled just in the first week of the crisis were estimated at $6 billion (Performance Research, 2020). By early April, NCAA athletic directors were forecasting drops in ticket revenue, sponsorships, and alumni donations to stretch into the 2020-21 seasons (Anderson, 2020). Polling revealed the public's hesitation to return to large stadiums and arenas, with 72 percent of respondents indicating in April 2020 that they would not feel comfortable attending a live sporting event until a vaccine was developed (Polacek, 2020).

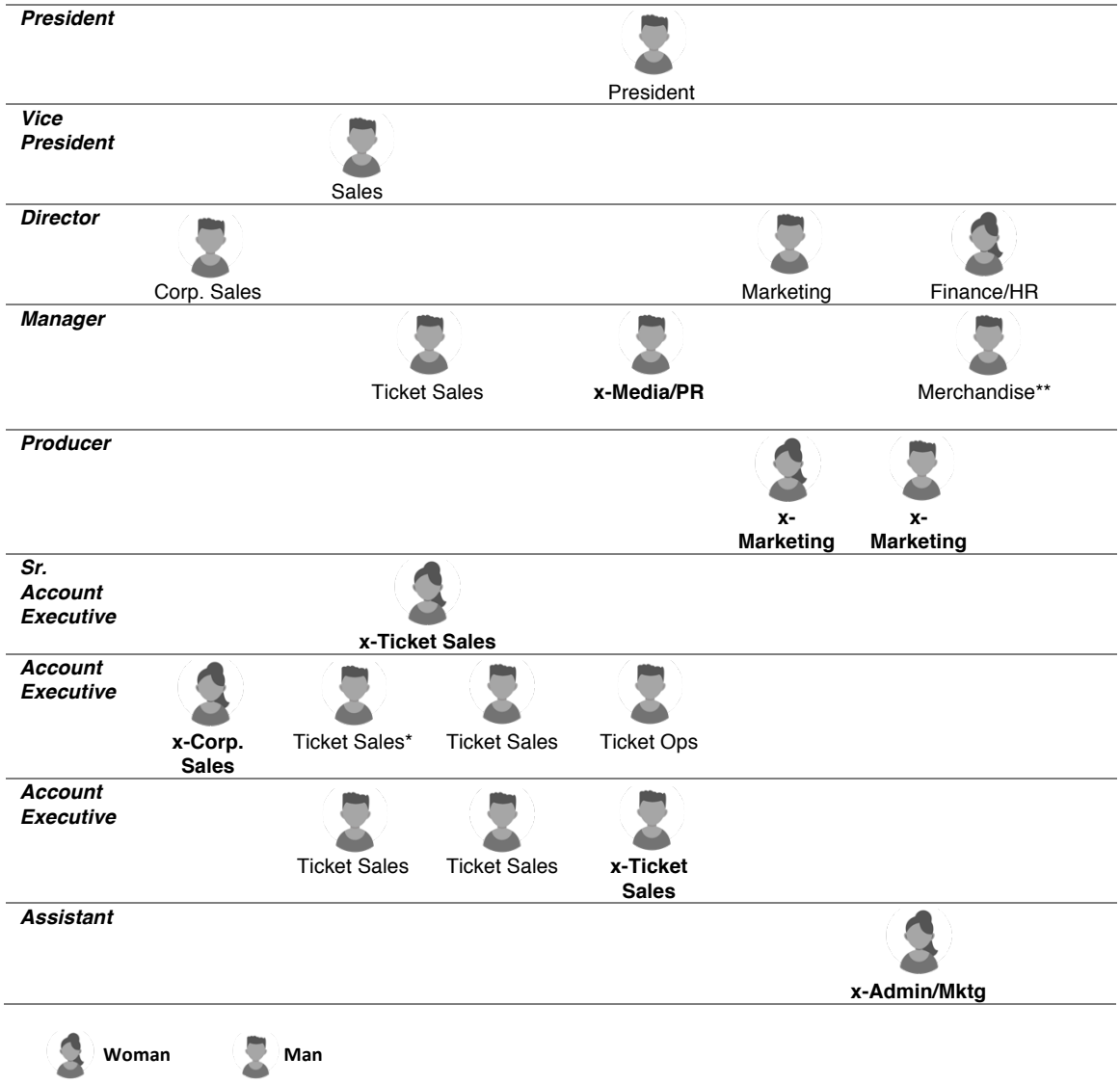
With such bleak financial forecasts, many professional sport organizations and college athletic departments made the decision to either lay off or furlough portions of their staffs (e.g., Draper, 2020; Uhler, 2020; Young, 2020). Within the first month following the season suspension, at least seven NHL organizations were among those that made "temporary staffing cuts" (Jarden, 2020). Predictions were even more dire at the

minor league level, where teams do not have the television revenue to support a return to play without fans in attendance. Some predicted the permanent shutdown of a number of minor league teams (Brown, 2020).

Both the Ice and the Blades were among the sport organizations that instituted staff downsizing within two months of the suspension (and eventual cancellation) of their league's season. At the Ice, the decision to lay off more than 40 percent of their full-time administrative office staff came just three days after their league announced the suspension of the season in March. At the Blades, the decision came in May, nearly two months later, after the suspended season had officially been cancelled, when a similar percentage of the staff was placed on furlough—though conversations about downsizing plans began in March as well.

In examining the staff affected by the downsizing at these two organizations, one fact was apparent: women were disproportionately impacted by the layoffs and furloughs, particularly at the Ice (see Figures 5 and 7). Four of the five women (80%) who worked for the Ice lost their jobs, compared to less than 28.5% of the men employed by the team. Gender diversity at the Ice decreased from 26.32% to 9.09% following the layoffs. At the Blades, the furloughs were more equitable, but gender diversity still decreased slightly: the staff was comprised of 40.91% women before the furloughs and 35.71% afterward (see Figures 6 and 8).

Figure 5: Layoffs at the Ice

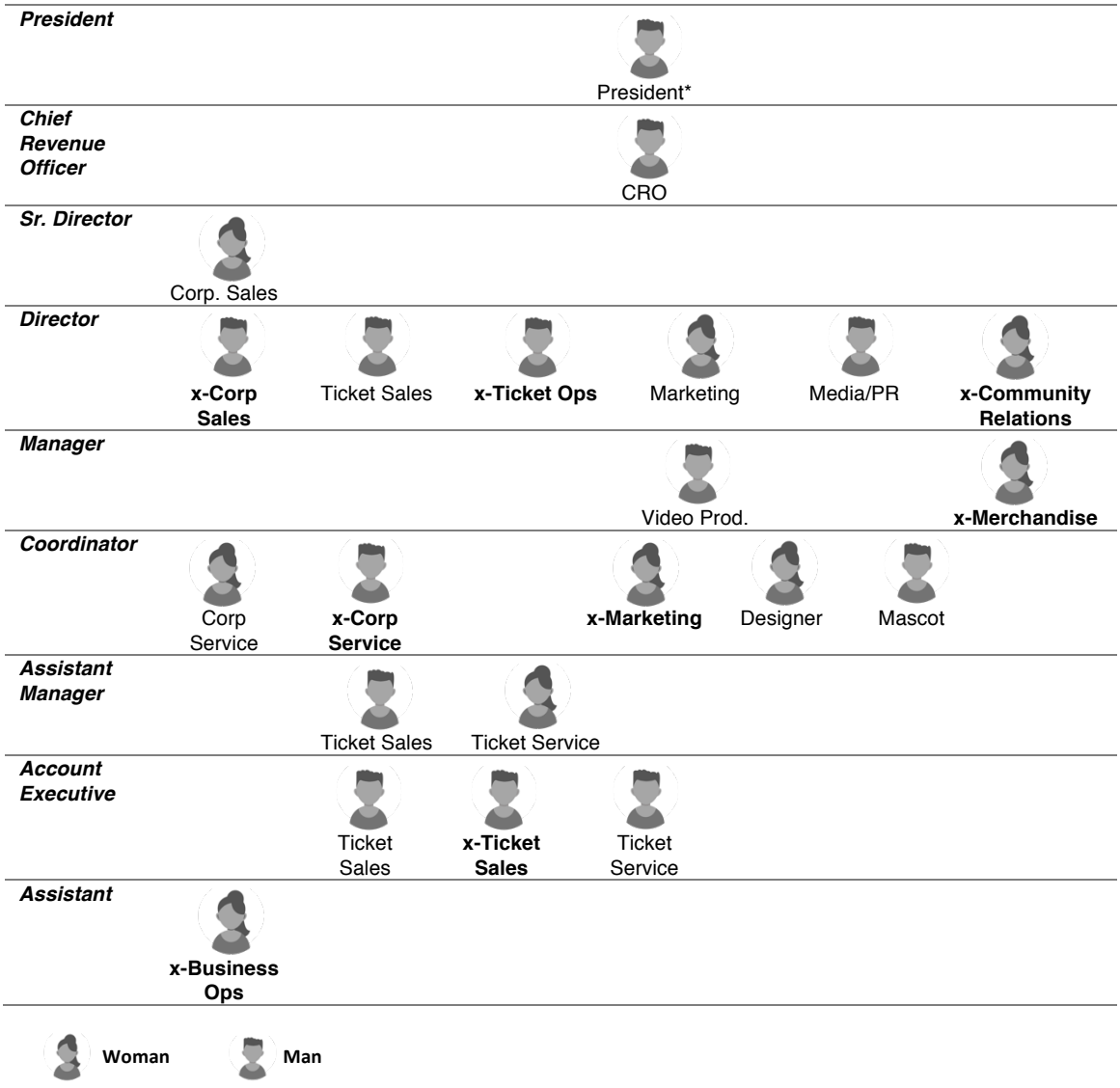


x-Bold: Position downsized during layoffs

* Resigned position after layoffs

** Initially included in layoffs but reinstated following Sean's resignation

Figure 6: Furloughs at the Blades



*Works in another city at the team's NHL affiliate, where he also holds the title of President.
x-Bold: Position downsized during furloughs

Figure 7: Change in Gender Diversity at the Ice

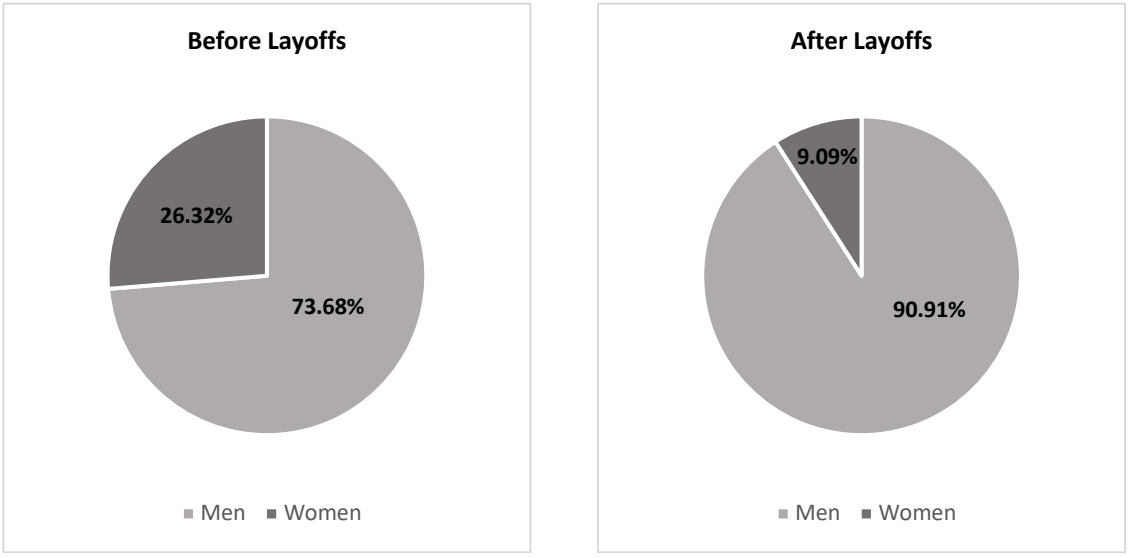
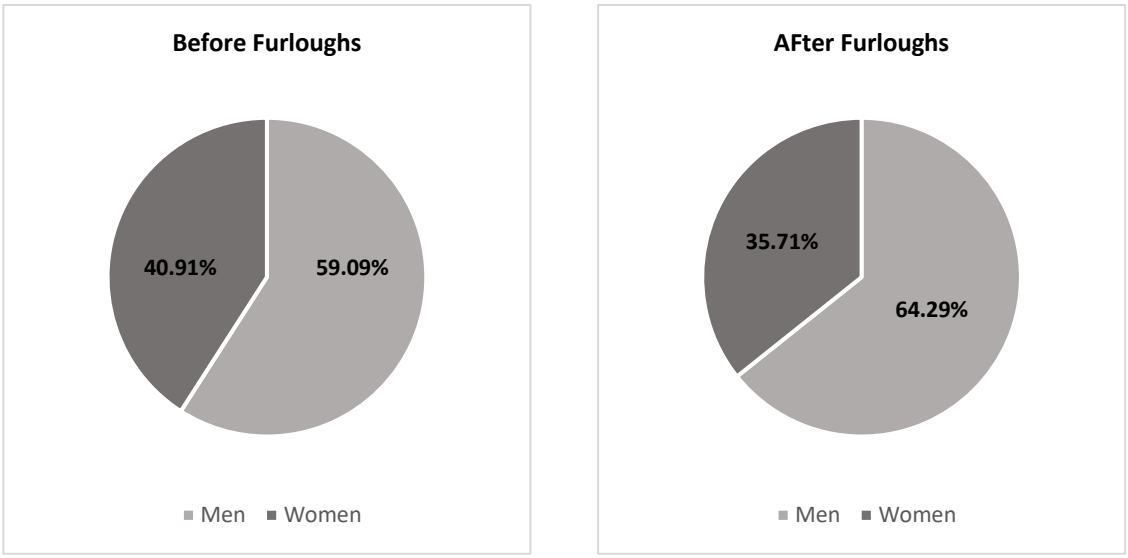


Figure 8: Change in Gender Diversity at the Blades



Such a finding is alarming, but not unusual. While we lack data specific to the sport industry, research shows that women are disproportionately impacted by managerial downsizing (Kalev, 2014) and that during times of economic crisis, such as the one spurred by the COVID-19 health pandemic, they are more likely to face layoffs (Ewing-Nelson, 2020). Gendered organization theory examines such phenomenon by considering

how gender is embedded into the structures and social practices of organizations (Acker, 1990). Through this lens, downsizing can "unwittingly reveal [a] company's built-in gender biases…and expose the inner workings of a gendered organization" (Williams, 2018, p. 221). Prior work on the gendered nature of downsizing has found that layoffs based on position and tenure disadvantage women due to gendered organizational structures, while layoffs based on performance evaluations significantly reduce gender discrepancies (Kalev, 2014). At one firm, feminized positions such as human resources and marketing were more susceptible to layoffs and women working in masculine roles, such as engineering, were more frequently let go than the men who held the majority of these positions (Mickey, 2019). Williams (2018) argued that women are more susceptible to layoffs because they are penalized by organizational logics that advantage men over women.

While such studies offer structural explanations of downsizing and, in the case of Williams (2018), the employees' perspectives of why they were downsized, current literature lacks insight into the managerial decision-making process when determining who to let go. In this chapter, I fill that gap through examining managers' explanations of how the layoff and furlough decisions were made. Specifically, I consider how gendered organizational structures and social practices impacted such decisions.

Multiple Hierarchies

Interviews with managers at the Ice and Blades revealed that the downsizing decisions—who to keep as well as who to let go—were made on the basis of multiple hierarchies within the organizations. Rather than organized around a single, position-based hierarchy, I find that status in the organizations is constructed around multiple

hierarchies. Gender is embedded into each of these hierarchies in different ways, and in combination with the choice of which hierarchies are evoked, can disadvantage women during downsizing.

Prior work by organizational scholars has argued that hierarchical structures are gendered, privileging men and masculinities over women and femininities (see Britton, 2000; 2017). Acker (1990) explained how both hierarchies and the jobs that they are comprised of are perceived as gender neutral, but the "ideal workers" to fill them traditionally describe white, heterosexual, able-bodied men. She wrote:

> Hierarchies, like jobs, are devoid of actual workers and based on abstract differentiations. Hierarchy is taken for granted, only its particular form is at issue. Job evaluation is based on the assumption that workers in general see hierarchy as an acceptable principle, and the final test of the evaluation of any particular job is whether its place in the hierarchy looks reasonable. The ranking of jobs within an organization must make sense to managers, but it is also important that most workers accept the ranking as just if the system of evaluation is to contribute to orderly working relationships (p. 148).

Thus, if hierarchies are accepted as an organizing principle by both managers and workers, but ideal worker norms lead to men filling positions higher in the hierarchy, they become gendered. In this way, organizational structures reproduce gender inequality, as power is distributed through hierarchical lines of authority (Britton, 2017).

Such a theorization of gendered hierarchies considers a single hierarchy based on a person's position in the organization; in other words, the standard organizational chart view of hierarchy. However, scholars have long recognized the existence of an 'informal' organizational hierarchy that exists alongside this 'formal,' or official one. Dating as far back as the Hawthorne Studies, Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939) identified the existence of an informal organization within a formal organization, in which status was determined on the basis of gender, department, and tenure, as well as by hierarchical title.

This social structure encapsulates the evolving network of social interactions in an organization, unrelated to its formal structure of authority (Barnard, 1968). These social interactions impact the formal organization, as a person's place in the informal organization may advance or impede their career (Moore, 1992).

Ravlin and Thomas (2005) further examined the role of both the formal and informal organization through the lens of status hierarchies. A person's position in the status hierarchy is based both on their achieved status (e.g., their job) and their ascribed status (e.g., categories such as race and gender) as well as the cultural context of the organization (Linton, 1936; Ravlin & Thomas, 2005; Rossides, 1976). Status hierarchies, Ravlin and Thomas (2005) argue, "influence virtually every aspect of organizational life in all types of organizations, from decisions regarding who will enter the organization to what life within it will be like" (p. 967).

As with the formal, position-based organizational hierarchy, informal organization or status hierarchies are also gendered, as gender itself has been socially constructed as hierarchical. Hegemonic masculinity—"the currently most honored way of being a man" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832)—enables the continued dominance of men in society, with other masculinities and all femininities assigned subordinate status on the gender hierarchy (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Schippers, 2007). Though all men may not embody hegemonic masculinity, all men benefit from its assurance of men's domination (Connell, 1995). With men and women presumed to be naturally different, "attributions of difference justify women's subordinate status" (Ely, 1995, p. 593) and men are deemed more worthy of status (Conway et al., 1996; Fiske et al., 2002) Gender also becomes linked with other systems

of difference, such as an organizational hierarchy, as Ridgeway and Correll (2004) contend that "[i]n some degree, these multiple systems of difference are defined out of one another and take their meanings from one another" (p. 522). Gender can especially become salient in contexts that are culturally defined as masculine or feminine (Correll, 2001); thus, in workplaces such as the Ice and Blades, gender may be particularly salient in the construction of hierarchies due to cultural associations of both sport and work as masculine.

While both a singular, organizational chart hierarchy and a singular status-based hierarchy are useful ways for understanding power and status in organizations, neither can explain the downsizing decisions at the Ice and Blades on their own. While an overarching status hierarchy within the Blades and Ice may exist, decisions about downsizing are made on the consideration of specific hierarchies. Managers at the two organizations evoked five different hierarchies in their decision making—position, tenure, performance, department, and social (see Figure 9). Where a person ranked in the hierarchy under consideration determined whether one would stay or lose their job. In the following sections, I examine each of these five hierarchies and their role in the downsizing decisions.

Figure 9: Multiple Gendered Organizational Hierarchies

Description of five organizational hierarchies and how they can become gendered.

Positional	Departmental	Tenure	Performance	Social
Based on job titles and positions in the organizational chart. Men are more likely to hold leadership roles due to gendered processes.	Based on departmental prioritization. Departments associated with masculinity hold more value in organizations.	Based on organizational and occupational tenure. Gendered social practices may impact whether people stay or leave.	Based on evaluation. Women are evaluated less favorably for equal work. Men are evaluated on the basis of potential.	Based on social status and capital. Gendered social relations benefit men and masculinities in organizations.

Positional Hierarchy

As previously discussed, the positional hierarchy represents the traditional organizational chart structure, with job titles designating positions of authority within organizations. In chapter 4, I examined the positional hierarchy of the Ice and the Blades, showing how the executive level positions at both organizations are held by men while the lowest level of the hierarchy, assistant, is occupied by women. Men historically have held most positions of power in organization, and this has remained true in sport organizations like the Ice and Blades as well (Acker, 1990; Hall et al., 1989; Yiamouyiannis & Osborne, 2012).

At the middle levels of the hierarchy, the gender diversity of the Ice and Blades differs: 25% of non-executive, non-assistant positions are held by women at the Ice, compared to 42.1% at the Blades. Though the positional hierarchy at both organizations can be considered gendered, it is more so at the Ice. In addition to these pre-existing differences in the positional hierarchy, the organizations evoke this hierarchy differently during the downsizing decisions.

Table 3: Layoffs at the Ice by Positional Hierarchy

Hierarchical level	Number of women prior to downsizing	Positions downsized, overall	Positions downsized, women
Executive	0 of 2 (0%)	0 of 2 (0%)	N/A
Director	1 of 3 (33.33%)	0 of 3 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)
Manager	0 of 3 (0%)	1 of 3 (33.33%)	N/A
Producer	1 of 2 (50%)	2 of 2 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)
Senior Account Executive/Account Executive	2 of 8 (25%)	3 of 8 (37.5%)	2 of 2 (100%)
Assistant	1 of 1 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)

At the Ice, keeping individuals in leadership roles was prioritized during the downsizing decisions, as all individuals who lost their jobs were at the manager level and below (see Table 3). In fact, 50 percent of the staff at the manager level and lower were downsized, while none of the five individuals in director level roles and above lost their jobs. As Peter, the director of marketing, explains, “It was tough, it was sad, but it's not on anybody's fault of not getting their job done or not fulfilling their duties or anything like that. I think it was more or less the seniority thing and experience thing.” While this prioritization based on seniority was seemingly gender neutral, its impact was not, because structurally, few women held leadership roles at the Ice. Only one woman—Hannah, the director of finance and human resources—held a manager-level position or higher, and she became the only woman not to lose her job during downsizing. The next highest ranking women were at the producer and senior account executive levels. Thus, women’s underrepresentation in leadership roles contributed to their disproportionate inclusion in the Ice’s layoffs.

Table 4: Furloughs at the Blades by Positional Hierarchy

Hierarchical level	Number of women prior to downsizing	Positions downsized, overall	Positions downsized, women
Executive	0 of 2 (0%)	0 of 2 (0%)	N/A
Senior Director/Director	3 of 7 (42.86%)	3 of 7 (42.86%)	1 of 3 (33.33%)
Manager/Assistant Manager	2 of 4 (50%)	1 of 4 (25%)	1 of 2 (50%)
Coordinator	3 of 5 (60%)	2 of 5 (40%)	1 of 3 (33.33%)
Account Executive	0 of 3 (0%)	1 of 3 (33.33%)	N/A
Assistant	1 of 1 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)

At the Blades, even though women are also underrepresented in leadership roles (though to lesser extent than the Ice), positional hierarchy contributed less to women's furloughs (see Table 4). Here, positional hierarchy played a smaller role in the downsizing decisions, as other hierarchies were instead prioritized. As a result, more people at the senior director and director level were furloughed than were people at any single hierarchical level below them. Still, the individuals in the three most senior positions (Andy, the president, Daniel, the chief revenue officer, and Marilyn, the senior director of corporate sales) kept their jobs, while the woman at the lowest rung of hierarchy (Penny, the business operations assistant) was furloughed. That the organization downsized so many directors appeared to result less from positional hierarchy and more so from job functions deemed essential by the organization at the time, as two of the three directors furloughed (and the one manager) came from the single-person departments of community relations (Haley), ticket operations (Steve), and merchandise (Bianca). Positional hierarchy did appear to matter on occasion, as in the marketing department, where the director, Gina, kept her job over the coordinator, Hollie (both roles were held by women). Daniel, the Blades' chief revenue officer, said, "Within marketing, it was the coordinator, because from a support standpoint, we didn't need the

support as much as we needed the direction and the bigger picture stuff." In other multiple-person departments, those holding more senior positions also kept their jobs; however, management evoked other hierarchies, such as tenure and department, when explaining these decisions.

When organizations' positional hierarchies are gendered in ways that lead to men holding more positions of leadership, women may be at a greater risk of job loss during downsizing. This is particularly true at the Ice, where women held few leadership roles and management evoked the positional hierarchy during the downsizing decisions. However, the positional hierarchy alone does not account for all of the women's job losses at either organization.

Departmental Hierarchy

In addition to hierarchical ranking of individuals by position, departments in the organization have hierarchical value, which is evoked during the downsizing decisions at the Ice and Blades. Previous research has demonstrated that certain departments (or certain types of work) are associated with masculinities and femininities, and work associated with men and masculinities is valued more by organizations, including in the sport industry (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). Jobs are frequently segregated by gender, and gendered work practices can reproduce this segregation by reinforcing assumptions that men and women prefer and are suited for different types of work (Ely, 1995; Ely & Padavic, 2007). Women are more likely to hold jobs in less prestigious, less visible departments, such as human resources and community relations, while men dominate positions with technical skill and control of resources and decision-making (Elliott & Smith, 2004; Mickey, 2019; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). Even when women ascend to

leadership positions, they are often relegated to marginalized departments (Stainback & Tomaskovic-Devey, 2012). This gendering of the departmental hierarchy can put women's jobs at risk during downsizing: at one high-tech firm, departments where women were clustered, such has marketing, experienced more layoffs during downsizing, while women working in areas dominated by men, such as engineering, were more likely to lose their jobs than their colleagues (Mickey, 2019).

While men dominate the leadership positions at these teams—particularly at the Ice—they also dominate the entry-level positions in one specific department: ticket sales. At the Ice and the Blades, high organizational value is placed on the ticket sales department, which is the largest department at both organizations and also contains the fewest women. Yet, it is the department that experiences the smallest staff reduction (see Table 5 and Table 6). Carl, the team president at the Ice, described the organization as having a sales mindset, and the employees in these roles recognize the status they hold. Vic, an account executive at the Ice, conveyed the value placed on the ticket sales department: "You know that Carl always talks about how we're kind of the core of the office." And when it came time to make decisions about layoffs and furloughs, this prioritization of ticket sales led to protecting as many of these positions as possible. Daniel, chief revenue office at the Blades, described the reasoning that only one person in ticket sales was included in the furloughs: "I mean, I would have kept all the ticket salespeople, but as the largest department, there was a feel that there had to be somebody in ticket sales." The Ice also prioritized keeping sales roles as much as possible, as Mark, the vice president of sales, explained: "I think what we tried to do is take the approach of as many revenue generating areas, individuals to keep on board and I think we're able to

accomplish that, but it was kind of mandated the number that we had to let go and eventually had to get to that number somehow." Such thinking reflects a component of what Dellinger (2004) called the business professional attitude: "the belief that the search for profits should be the first priority in any organization" (p. 554).

Table 5: Layoffs at the Ice by Department

Hierarchical level	Number of women prior to downsizing	Positions downsized, overall	Positions downsized, women
Sales	2 of 11 (18.18%)	3 of 11 (27.27%)	2 of 2 (100%)
Ticket Sales	1 of 8 (12.5%)	2 of 8 (25%)	1 of 1 (100%)
Corporate Sales	1 of 3 (33.33%)	1 of 3 (33.33%)	1 of 1 (100%)
All Other Departments	3 of 7 (42.86%)	4 of 7 (57.14%)	2 of 3 (66.67%)
Marketing/Creative	1 of 3 (33.33%)	2 of 3 (66.67%)	1 of 1 (100%)
Public Relations	0 of 1 (0%)	1 of 1 (100%)	N/A
Community Relations	N/A	N/A	N/A
Merchandise	0 of 1 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)	N/A
Administration	2 of 2 (100%)	1 of 2 (50%)	1 of 2 (50%)

*President is not included in this table, as the role oversees all departments.

Table 6: Furloughs at the Blades by Department

Hierarchical level	Number of women prior to downsizing	Positions downsized, overall	Positions downsized, women
Sales	3 of 11 (27.27%)	4 of 11 (36.36%)	0 of 3 (0%)
Ticket Sales	1 of 7 (14.29%)	2 of 7 (28.57%)	0 of 1 (0%
Corporate Sales	2 of 4 (50%)	2 of 4 (50%)	0 of 2 (0%)
All Other Departments	6 of 9 (66.67%)	4 of 9 (44.44%)	4 of 6 (66.67%)
Marketing/Creative	3 of 5 (60%)	1 of 5 (20%)	1 of 3 (33.33%)
Public Relations	0 of 1 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)	N/A
Community Relations	1 of 1 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)
Merchandise	1 of 1 (100%	1 of 1 (100%	1 of 1 (100%)
Administration	1 of 1 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)

*President/Chief Revenue Officer are not included in this table, as they oversee all departments.

Masculine discourses of strength and athleticism also characterize the ticket sales department, particularly at the Ice, where Carl, the team president, notes that they intentionally hire athletes as ticket sales account executives. As discussed in Chapter 6, the three most recent hires for this position—Vic, James, and Clayton—are all former college football players. Additionally, a large wall decal adorns the wall above the Ice's "sales pit," the cubicle area where the ticket sales department works, draws a comparison

between the work of a ticket salesperson and that of a stonecutter (gendered as a man, as previously described in Chapter 4):

> POUND THE ROCK
> When nothing seems to help, I go and look at a stonecutter HAMMERING AWAY AT HIS ROCK perhaps a HUNDRED TIMES without as much as a crack showing in it. Yet at the hundred and first blow it WILL split in two, and I know it was NOT that blow that did it, BUT ALL THAT HAD GONE BEFORE.

The other sales department at the Ice and Blades, corporate sales, is also valued by the organizations, though it is a smaller department and appears to rank lower in the departmental hierarchy, as a higher percentage of employees in corporate sales lose their jobs. The workers in corporate sales tend to rank higher on the positional hierarchy than those in ticket sales, yet it is ticket sales that is prioritized over corporate sales during the downsizing. The corporate sales departments are also less gender imbalanced. At the Blades, 50% of corporate sales employees are women, and at the Ice, a third are women (though all of the women working in corporate sales have at least some job responsibilities in the more feminized service and activation role, which involves customer service and coordination with clients).

Because men dominate these positions, and because so few sales positions are eliminated, this decreases the likelihood that a man will be downsized, not necessarily increasing the likelihood that a woman will be. At the Blades, the three women working in the ticket and corporate sales departments keep their jobs. But in the case of the Ice, both women in sales lose their jobs despite the odds being in their favor to keep their role. In one case, management explains this by the woman's lower position in the positional hierarchy and the associated service-oriented job duties, as the director and vice president keep their jobs over Tina, the account executive in corporate sales. However, in the other,

the organization's explanation of making their downsizing decisions based on the positional hierarchy falls short, as Finley, the ticket sales executive with the most seniority and tenure, and by some metrics the best sales performance, is let go. She is also the only woman in the department. The decision to let her go is based on other gendered hierarchies in the organization, as will be discussed in the following sections.

Meanwhile, the value of more feminized departments like marketing and community relations is downplayed and described as "not needed" during the pandemic, despite the organizations continuing to do this type of work in the months that follow. For example, Hannah, the director of finance and human resources at the Ice, described how the downsizing decisions started with the marketing and community relations-related functions:

> So basically, it started off with well, people aren't really going to be coming in and we can man, so, and we're not going to be creating content right now. So we basically let the creative team go other than the director...who has basic knowledge to be able to do everything that they do…Other than things with Facebook and stuff, but he's learning. And there were others of us who had, who have access to the Facebook anyways. And then it came down to we knew we would reduce the broadcaster and community because nobody's going out in the community and he's not broadcasting games.

At the Blades, the chief revenue officer, Daniel, also noted that these functions were less of a priority, stating that the team's "foundation is almost non-existent right now. I mean, there's a few donation requests," as well as that "social media and promo items and game operations were taking a backseat." Certainly, during the stoppage of games that was brought on by the pandemic, it is true that some functions of marketing and community relations were also on pause. But so too were some of the functions of the sales departments, which, due to the suspension and eventual cancellation of games, the uncertainty surrounding the state of the following season, and the pandemic-related

economic anxiety for customers, shifted much of their focus to maintaining relationships rather than actively selling. In fact, despite Hannah's assertions that this marketing and community relations work was not happening, at the Ice it became a focus of their business efforts during this time, as Peter, the marketing director, related the importance of these efforts:

> I think pretty huge. I think there's a lot of people [fans] that have been furloughed or laid off or are just home and, or have a very shortened work or school time. So they're requested by the government basically to stay home and what else are you gonna do when you stay home? Watch TV, play video games or go on social media. So I feel like right now it's super important to think of some creative things.

This work was important enough that in the absence of the employees who usually performed it, others in the organization started doing this work. Specifically, the ticket sales employees—whose jobs were prioritized because of the importance of their department—take on the tasks of updating the website, brainstorming creative ideas for social media, and going out in the community for events. Thus, the prioritization of sales during the downsizing led to the elimination of individuals in non-sales roles, despite the fact that the work those people were doing was needed. Because more women hold roles in these non-sales departments, they were more likely to face downsizing, even if they may have had higher status in the positional hierarchy.

Tenure Hierarchy

Another hierarchy evoked by managers during the downsizing decisions was the tenure hierarchy. Managers used this hierarchy to describe both job tenure—the amount of time a person had worked in the organization—and occupational tenure—the amount of experience the person had in the industry. Just as Acker (1990) contended with positional hierarchies, the tenure hierarchy is purportedly gender neutral, based on an

objective, quantitative measure of how long someone has worked for an organization or in an industry. However, norms about work and gender, as well as other social practices, can impact who is hired or promoted in an organization, as well as who chooses to stay or leave. For instance, research has shown that women have higher job turnover intentions than men, due to lower job satisfaction based on factors such as pay, promotion opportunities, and recognition for accomplishments (Miller & Wheeler, 1992). Women who experience sexual harassment on the job are also more likely to leave their positions—one study found that nearly 80 percent of those who experience sexual harassment change jobs withing two years, compared to just over 50 percent of people who do not experience harassment (McLaughlin et al., 2017). In men's professional sport organizations, women regularly experience sexism in their jobs, leading them to consider leaving the organization or even the industry (Hindman & Walker, 2020). Shorter tenure for women may be problematic, as research on MBA graduates has shown that when switching organizations with a short tenure at a previous job, women fare worse than men (Patterson et al., 2017).

Gender norms around responsibilities for the home and childcare may impact the tenure hierarchy as well. Though research has shown increasing job tenure for women in recent decades, such trends are explained by married women with children more consistently staying in the workforce compared to the past. For never-married women without children—such as all but two of the women working at the Blades and the Ice—and for all men regardless of marriage and parental status, job tenure has declined (Hollister & Smith, 2014). While many women historically exited the workforce following either marriage or childbirth (Smith et al., 2001), recent employment patterns

suggest that more women are remaining in their existing jobs following these life events (Hollister & Smith, 2014). The two women with children in the present study illustrate this change: Marilyn, the senior director of corporate sales at the Blades, paused her occupational tenure for several years after the birth of her daughters, though she worked part-time outside of the industry during this period. As a result, her occupational tenure is the same as Daniel, the team's chief revenue officer, who also has a child but did not exit the workforce as a result. Two decades Marilyn's junior, Haley, the Blades' community relations director, returned to her job at the Blades following her 12-week maternity leave, maintaining her tenure status in the hierarchy.

At the Ice and the Blades, the tenure hierarchies do not reveal many gender differences. A few reasons for this may exist. First, both organizations are fairly young. At the time of the downsizing, the Blades had been in operation for just over a decade and the Ice for just under four years. More time might be needed for wider, more meaningful job tenure differences to emerge. Second, multiple employees at the Blades indicated that it was expected that people only work for the organization for a couple years and then move on, noting that it is a minor league sport organization and thus seen as a developmental opportunity for the business office employees, just as it is for the athletes. Barrett, the Blades' video production manager, described the mindset:

> A lot of people are there two years and move on. It's like well, you know, 'well that's the kind of organization we are.' You just get your feet wet here and you move on to a bigger organization.

Third, the staff at both organizations was relatively young. Nearly two-thirds of the employees are in their 20s, and approximately a quarter of employees are in their 30s. Two employees at each the Ice and the Blades are in their 40s or older. Bob, the director

of corporate sales at the Blades and in his 30s, described why he felt so many of his coworkers were in their 20s:

> Because that's the level of the job. You're not gonna see too many 30-year-olds trying to be an account exec. You know, they're going for...at that point, they should have some more experience under their belts. So they'll, could, be going for a little higher level stuff. They'll be trying to [go] for manager at least. So it's just the level of the job.

As such, many of the workers have not had the opportunity to build substantial job or occupational tenure. Additionally, their young age is likely related to the low number of employees—both men and women—that are married or have children. As mentioned only two women (both at the Blades) have children—and during the course of this study, Haley was the first woman in the Blades' 11-plus years of operations to take maternity leave. However, it's not just few women who have children at home, as only three men are fathers. In total, just six of the 40 employees are married across the two organizations, though many others shared that they were engaged or living with their partners. The life-stage status of the employees, then, may account for some of the lack of gender differences in tenure, as expected differences due to marital and parental status are not relevant to a large portion of the staffs.

In regard to the downsizing, managers evoked the tenure hierarchy in the elimination of four positions. In all four instances, a man is let go or furloughed. At the Ice, job tenure is mentioned as the primary reason that Clayton, a ticket sales account executive is let go rather than any of the four other men who hold the same position. As the ticket sales manager, Mason, relayed:

> You know, Clayton, unfortunately the first one I hired, and it really hurt me that this was his first job out of college, but he was the last one in, you know, last one in, first one out. He was our lowest performing sales rep, which is no indication of

> his ability, but it was his first year out of college and we didn't have the highest expectations for him. He was doing a really good job.

Even though Clayton's sales performance could have justified the decision to let him go, Mason made the decision on the basis of tenure. Similarly, George, one of the three men ticket sales executives, is furloughed at the Blades on the basis of tenure. He was one of two employees hired in the Blades' ticket sales department in the five months prior to the downsizing. While George had a few weeks more tenure than the department's newest employee, Edwin, management chose to lay off George because of state unemployment laws that would have made it difficult for Edwin, who had just relocated from another state, to receive unemployment benefits.

In the two other instances, the decision is made between a man and a woman on the basis of tenure, both at the Blades. In the first, management decided between keeping Annie or Ted, the two corporate service coordinators. Daniel, the team's chief revenue officer, shared they kept Annie, even though she had shorter job tenure, because of her longer occupational tenure which contributed to their belief in her abilities to handle the role better. In the other, the decision was between Marilyn, the senior director of corporate sales, and Bob, the director. As Daniel explained, "I mean, the two people who were here, I mean, I had to pick one. So it was tenure." Marilyn kept her job and Bob was furloughed. Even though Marilyn also held the advantage in the positional hierarchy, her manager made the decision based on tenure, where in this case, she also had the advantage.

Thus, in the case of these two organizations, the tenure hierarchy does not appear to contribute to the gendered downsizing decisions. On the contrary, the two times when tenure is used to make a decision between a man and woman, the woman keeps her

position in both cases. Thus, provided that women are not more likely to have shorter tenure due to other social processes (Kalev, 2014), basing downsizing decisions on tenure does not appear to negatively impact women.

Performance Hierarchy

Both the Ice and the Blades evoke a performance hierarchy in some of the downsizing decisions. In performance hierarchies, individuals are ranked based on evaluations of their job performance. These hierarchies have the potential to be gendered, as performance evaluations may be subjective rather than objective, and men and women may be evaluated differently due to gender biases. People make judgments about workers' abilities based on their gender (e.g., Kanter, 1977), and research has demonstrated that women are judged more harshly, with women needing to perform better to earn equal evaluations and to receive better evaluations in order to be promoted (Correll, 2004; Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Pugh & Wahrman, 1983). Sport management research, too, has reported such findings, with women in sport organizations facing challenges of needing to work harder than men (Aitchison, 2000; Burton et al., 2012). This may be exacerbated in many sport organizations where women are largely in the minority, as Heilman and Haynes (2005) found women receive less credit for their success in men-dominated environments. Women who work in gender-balanced teams, however, receive greater credit for their work (Williams et al., 2012).

In some organizations, performance hierarchies are based on formal evaluation procedures, such as annual reviews. While they are intended to create objective measures of job performance, they often reflect managers' personal feelings about employees (Culbert & Rout, 2010; Dobbin 2009; Fryer 2009). Further, some studies have shown that

women receive lower evaluation scores and that in particular, men tend to give lower scores to women (e.g., Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Tsui & O'Reilly; 1989)—though other research has found that women score equally or even higher than men on formal performance evaluations (e.g., Castilla, 2012; Lewis, 1997). One explanation for the variation in whether performance evaluations disadvantage women may relate to the context of the studies, as women are evaluated more negatively in settings dominated by men (Nieva & Gutek, 1980). Additionally, the use of formal evaluations may cause managers to pay attention to potential discrimination: Kalev (2014) found that downsizings based on formal performance evaluations did not decrease managerial diversity like those based on position and tenure did, possibly because the use of evaluations triggered antidiscrimination accountability.

At the Ice and the Blades, however, downsizing decisions based on the performance hierarchy do not rely on formal evaluations, but informal judgments of performance made by the decision makers at the time of decision. Such evaluations based on recollections and unstructured observations are particularly susceptible to gender or racial bias (Fiske et al., 1991). At the Blades, only one decision is made on the basis of the performance hierarchy, when management at the organization decides between Ted and Annie, the two corporate service coordinators. As mentioned previously, this decision was made on the basis of both tenure and performance. Annie kept her job, because though she had less job tenure, she had more occupational tenure and was judged to be a higher performing employee than Ted. Though this was not based on a formal performance evaluation, gender bias did not negatively affect the evaluation of Annie in this instance.

At the Ice, performance evaluations come into play in the downsizing decisions related to the team's ticket sales department. Interestingly, though this is a department for which objective performance measures (i.e., sales results, see Table 7) exist, the performance evaluations are subjective, based on past impressions and personal relationships. Two of the six account executives are let go, and while one—Clayton, a man—is the lowest sales performer, the other led the department in the group sales category. Mason, the department manager, offered this explanation of the decision to layoff Finley, the only woman in the department:

> Because it was time to make a change, and on paper, it might not make sense that she was our best-selling group rep. She, you know, she sold the most group tickets and most group revenue. But the way we do things in the sales space, it's kind of split up with different categories. So she had some of the absolute best categories there are and we've, and we thought that she was underperforming with those categories. So even though she had the most it was a little bit, you know, you could misread it that she has the most group sales, but she also had the most opportunity and wasn't maximizing it.

Table 7: Ice Ticket Sales Department Sales Performance, December 2019

Account Executive	Season Tickets	Group Tickets	Total
Martin	$143,810	$37,695	$181,505
Sean	$125,481	$42,593	$168,074
Finley	$101,298	$58,734	$160,032
Vic	$108,183	$34,401	$142,584
James	$63,240	$6,917	$70,157
Clayton	$29,865	$7,507	$37,372

In Mason's view, though Finley was objectively ("on paper") performing well, he judged her to be underperforming. Even when women perform well, managers often perceive them as lacking competence and attribute their success to other factors—in this case, being assigned the "best" sales categories (Heilman, 2001). This contrasts with the way Mason talked about James, who had the second-least tenure and second-lowest sales in the department:

> Even though James was technically the second newest guy in, he was hired before Clayton, but like months before, like he started last season, but he's someone that even though his sales aren't the highest when it comes to groups, he has sold a ton of packages. He comes in and works hard. His work ethic is, can't be beat. So he was someone that we knew we were keeping.

While Mason evaluates Finley's performance more harshly than her output would suggest, he excuses James' shortcomings and points to his work ethic as a sign of future performance. Similarly, even though Clayton lost his job due to tenure, Mason said that Clayton "was doing a really good job" despite having the lowest sales figures in the department. Evaluations of future performance have been shown to be impacted by gender stereotypes, and the men at the Ice seemed to have their potential future performance considered more favorably (Heilman et al., 2015). Thus, at the Ice, the performance hierarchy becomes gendered because men and women are judged by different standards based on subjective evaluations, putting women more at risk during downsizing.

Aside from these subjective evaluations of objective sales results, Mason noted critiques of Finley's job performance in other areas. He described that he and Mark, the team's vice president of sales, noticed "patterns" in her work habits:

> She would always have flyer deliveries first thing in the morning. So she wasn't coming in until 10 o'clock, 10:30 every morning because of flyer deliveries. And then was leaving early for other events. And we want people to network but it started to turn into like, no work was getting done during the day, like constantly. Low call numbers, like groups.

Mason went on to again acknowledge that she led the team in group sales but that they believed she was underperforming. He bases this underperformance in part on the low call numbers, which is one way in which an account executive can sell tickets. Call numbers are an important metric to the Ice—their daily golf putting competition, detailed

in Chapter 6, incentivizes the number of calls the ticket sales staff makes, not the number of sales they make, while the stonecutter quote adorning the office wall implies that making numerous calls will lead to sales. However, the other work Finley was doing, like the flyer deliveries and networking events, also contributes to sales performance. Finley was still selling tickets—more group tickets than any of her colleagues—but because she was not accomplishing that through a dictated method, calls, her performance was discounted.

Additionally, based on my own observations, Mason's contention that Finley arrived at the office at 10 or 10:30 "every morning" is an exaggeration. Numerous days when I begin my observations before 10 a.m., she is either already at her desk or arrives shortly after me. On the days when she is not, it is because she has a scheduled day off. On at least one occasion, I note her arrival before the official opening of the office at 9 a.m., and note that one of the men in the department arrives for the day at 9:01. One morning, she arrives while I am getting settled at my own cubicle for the day around 9:30 a.m. Several minutes later, I overhear Mark quizzing her on the deliveries:

> Mark: "Finley, how'd the deliveries go this morning?"
>
> Finley: "They went fine."
>
> Mark: "Yeah? Where'd ya go?"

I also observe a conversation between Finley, Sean, another Ice account executive, and Hannah, the Ice's director of finance and human resources, in which Finley is requesting permission to leave early for personal reasons. As recounted in my field notes:

> Finley asks Hannah if they are officially closing the office early today. Hannah shakes her head no. Finley says she was going to ask Mason if she could leave this afternoon because she needs to help her friend move.

Sean: “What’s her name?”

Finley: “Isabella.”

Sean: “What’s her last name?”

Finley: “Her last name is Lovett.”

Hannah to Sean: “Are you going to stalk her?”

Hannah to Finley: “Are all your orders done? Didn’t you say you had to go pick up orders?”

Finley says she is about to go do that, that she was trying to do it but got a call. Hannah asks her if those are orders for tomorrow. Finley says yes, and again says she is going to get them right now. Hannah doesn’t say anything in response. As she walks away past my cubicle, Hannah gives me a look that seems to suggest some annoyance at Finley.

In this conversation, Finley is expressing a desire to leave work early, in addition to a need to leave the office to complete a work task (picking up orders). Hannah’s reaction to Finley suggests annoyance at the request, but Finley is not the only member of the ticket sales department to ask to leave work early. On another day, Sean repeatedly argues with his manager, Mason, about how he wants to leave work early. Yet is Finley, the department’s only woman, on whom this impression of ‘not wanting to work’ sticks, and it contributes to her performance evaluation and eventual downsizing.

Social Hierarchy

Lastly, a social hierarchy is evoked in some of the downsizing decisions at the Ice, specifically in the ticket sales department. As discussed, Finley loses her job over four of the other men, despite ranking higher in the positional and tenure hierarchies, based partly on gendered evaluations of her performance positioning her lower on the performance hierarchy. But this decision is also made on the basis how well liked various

members of the ticket sales department are; in other words, a social hierarchy determined by interpersonal relationships.

The social hierarchy is built around individuals' social status, which is determined in part by gender (Ravlin & Thomas, 2005). Relationship building and networking are keys to career success, and often are activities that center around men engaging in activities together such as hunting, golfing, and other sports (Mickey, 2019; Morgan & Martin, 2006; Williams et al., 2012). Prior research has demonstrated that cultural similarities do not just lead to people 'liking' each other, but become the basis for merit evaluations (DiMaggio, 1987; Lamont & Molnar, 2002; Rivera, 2012). Thus, men are not just building friendships in the office through such activities, but creating hierarchies that determine worth in the organization. One way men 'mobilize' masculinities at work is by making decisions based on their preferred interpersonal relationships, and men benefit from managerial masculinities including infomalism, in which men build social relationship with each other (Martin, 2001; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2005). As discussed in Chapter 6, at the Ice, men play golf and other sports together outside of work, while inside of work, formalized employee bonding events are often organized around sport, and when such events emphasize the differences between men and women—such as Finley's half-hearted participation in the department's golf-putting competition—women's place on the social hierarchy may be diminished. Women, on the other hand, find no such benefit from their socialization and bonding with their women colleagues, finding that their network is unable to protect each other from downsizing (Williams, 2018; see also the discussion of the reality show bonding in Chapter 6).

Social status is also determined by performances of masculinities, with "men's position in the social hierarchy is determined not just by whether they behave in a tough or courageous manner, but by the extent to they do this more or better than women and other men" (Reid et al., 2018, p. 582, cf. Connell, 1987). Such "masculinity contests," such as downplaying weakness, celebrating strength and stamina, putting work first, and hyper-competition, become a way through which men build social capital (Berdahl et al., 2018). The planking challenge, discussed in Chapter 6, presented one clear example of such a status-building contest at the Ice. Interestingly, the individuals in the ticket sales department who did not participate in the planking—Finley and Clayton—are the two who lose their jobs during the downsizing.

Personality forms another basis for status on the social hierarchy, and gender norms dictate different 'acceptable' personalities for men and women. Shaw and Hoeber (2003), for instance, found that in sport organizations, "a [strong] man is direct and a direct woman is a bitch" (p. 366). In academia, women are unable to behave in the same way as their men colleagues (e.g., they cannot be rigid) because students have different expectations of how they should behave (Britton, 2017). Women often find they face a "double bind" in the workplace—traits like forwardness, aggression, and self-confidence are needed for success (and rewarded in men), but women who portray such traits are penalized for doing (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003, Williams et. al, 2012). Evaluations of personality come into play at the Ice, where Mason, the ticket sales manager, cited Finley's personality as one of the primary reasons that she is let go. He explained, "But yeah, you know, the way that the sales teams really reacted to her and thought of her at most points was not how we want our sales team to be so..." When her colleagues

referred to Finley's personality, they often made reference to her being from "New York." As Vic, one of the other account executives in the department, shared:

> She had a strong personality, but we worked together and we were able to coordinate different things and get stuff done. And we argued here and there but we just have like a professional relationship, I guess is the best way to call it towards the end of everything before the coronavirus hit. She just had a very strong personality. So it wasn't perceived well, I guess, by everyone in the group [chuckle]. I understood it, you know, from New York. I grew up with a lot of people that were like that. But it just was a change of pace for people around here, and I think it was, not eye opening, but like, 'oh god,' like 'oh man.'

As Vic's quote illustrates, Finley's "strong" personality was not "perceived well" by her coworkers. Vic does not suggest that her personality got in the way of her job duties, but rather states that he was able to work with her. Yet, their relationship was "professional," whereas the men in the department discussed their friendships with each other and with their manager and other superiors in the organization.

While Finley's personality may have been "strong," she was not the only member of the department that displayed their personality at work. The Ice's sales pit was often bubbling with social banter, with coworkers trading jabs (often verbal and sometimes physical). Contrast the characterization of Finley with Mason's description of Sean, another account executive who often was the center of attention:

> [H]e's mentioned for a while that he might want, he might be looking to do something else. He's kind of done with working in sports or working in sales. He wants something new. But he's someone that we really liked, and he's good at his job and everyone loves him. So we decided to keep him during the layoffs.

Even though Mason was aware that Sean, who ranked lower than Finley in the positional and tenure hierarchies (and by some objective measures, the performance hierarchy), was considering leaving the organization, the Ice decided to keep him during the downsizing, because they liked him. Within two days of the layoffs, Sean decided to resign his

position. The Ice then brought back their merchandise manager, Scott, rather than reinstating either of the two employees let go from the ticket sales department.

Lastly, status on the social hierarchy can be affected by judgements of women's appearance and dress. Women working in occupations dominated by men can be ranked as the basis of their perceived physical attractiveness (Miller, 2004). Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 5, women are disadvantaged by evaluations of their dress in the workplace. Britton (2017) shared an example of a young woman academic whose clothing—and in particular, assumptions that she was not wearing a bra—was a topic of conversation among the men in the department, who "didn't like how she dressed" (p. 17). The woman was stunned to learn that she was being evaluated differently than the men she worked with, and later left her job. For Finley, evaluations about her dress came into play in the downsizing decisions. Mason explained the decision was based partly on complaints the team received about her. Asked to explain what type of complaints, he shared:

> And then we would get complaints, we would get complaints from people about the way she dressed during games and things like that. And she had been spoken to by Hannah about that before…You know, the way she dressed in the office when, wearing jeans on days, like, multiple times, I would talk to her about that.

The complaints Mason referenced came from fans, customers of the team, who took issue with Finley's choice of clothing. As discussed in Chapter 5, the Ice did not have a formal dress code, and men in the organization were able to clearly articulate the expectations for how men should dress, but struggled to explain what women should wear. During the games that I observed, I occasionally took note of Finley's clothing, noting on one occasion that her outfit of a team pullover, slacks, and casually pulled up hair made me wonder whether she was staying to work that night's game because she looked too

casually dressed to me, even though her outfit was actually in line with the men's dress that evening, on a casual Wednesday. On another night, her dark lipstick, low-cut white sweater, and tight leather-like pants, caught my attention, as I myself questioned whether it was in line with the business professional dress (i.e., suits) that the men in her department wore. It seemed whether she tried for a casual look or a dressier look, Finley's appearance emphasized her differences from the men.

As shared in Chapter 5, Finley too was aware that she was critiqued for her appearance, specifically wearing jeans (though, in her telling, they were black jeans that she purchased from the career section at the store). She reported being frustrated that so much attention was placed on her clothes, rather than on her sales performance. And while Mason notes she had been talked to about breaking the rules (even though there is no formal code) related to wearing jeans, others shared that "everyone" tried to get away with dress code violations. Hannah had indicated this was a widespread challenge in the office. Yet, when it came to determining status in the social hierarchy as it related to the downsizing decisions, Finley is the only one for whom it is an issue—and it contributes to the loss of her job.

A Tale of Two Downsizings

Though both the Ice and the Blades have gendered organizational hierarchies, as discussed, the outcomes of downsizing were different for women at the two organizations. The Blades, which saw gender diversity decrease from 40.91% to 35.71% following the furloughs, experienced a much smaller decline than the Ice. Women at the Blades were disadvatanged.by to the positional hierarchy which protected men at the executive level while eliminating the position of the women working as an assistant.

They were also disadvantaged by the departmental hierarchy, which prioritized keeping jobs in ticket sales, where mostly men worked, and eliminating jobs in feminized departments like community relations. In each instance where the Blades based decisions on tenure and performance, women kept their jobs. Notably, the Blades' management did not evoke the social hierarchy in their decision making.

At the Ice, the positional, departmental, performance, and social hierarchies disadvantage women during the downsizing, as gender diversity decreases from 26.32% to 9.09%. The prioritization of keeping people in leadership roles, when only one woman held a position at the manager level or above, and keeping people in ticket sales, where only one woman worked, was particularly impactful on this outcome. Then, within the ticket sales department, management's evocation of the performance and social hierarchies cost the sole woman in the department her job, despite her higher ranking in the positional and tenure hierarchies (and her objectively better sales results). Only the tenure hierarchy does not directly lead to a woman not losing her job, as the one time it is evoked, a man working in ticket sales is let go.

Besides differences in the hierarchies evoked and the gendered nature of those hierarchies, the process of making the downsizing decisions varied between two organizations. At the Ice, management announced the layoffs within days of the suspension of the season. Three men—Carl, the president, Mark, the vice president of sales, and Mason, the ticket sales manager—spend two days deliberating in closed door meetings, particularly on the decisions regarding the ticket sales department. Hannah, the team's director of finance and human resources, is involved in some, but not all, of the decision making. She is not involved in the ticket sales decisions. At the Blades, the

furloughs are announced two months following the season suspension, though the organization's human resources department—which is located in another city, in the NHL affiliate's offices—prepared a tiered list prioritizing staff for potential layoffs or furloughs during the first two weeks of the suspension. This list was made without the input of Daniel, who manages the Blades' office on a day-to-day basis, though he later had input. He explained:

> And so it turned out that she [the vice president of human resources] had already put together kind of a three tier of employees. Like here's a tier one who would be the first to go. Here's a tier two and here's the core group. So they didn't reach out to me ahead of time to form that, they did that on their own. Now, once she was aware that I was in the loop, we talked about it, but I don't know if I hadn't told her that I was in the loop that it wouldn't just happen without my input.

Two months later, when the furloughs were announced, they were also based on a list created by human resources, though there were some changes since the initial list and Daniel was able to provide final input. He said:

> I got a call that said, 'Hey, we're gonna have to furlough some people. And here's who was on the list.' And it was based somewhat on some of the conversations that had been had early on, but when the list came out and just they, you know, to me and based upon where we were at, I said, 'Well, you know, I need, I'd like to keep this one person around, they're being productive for me, can we do that?' And the answer to that ended up being yes.

These differences in how the decisions were made at the Ice and the Blades help explain some of the disparities in outcomes related to gender diversity, beyond differences in how the hierarchies were gendered. At the Blades, the involvement of the human resources department located in another city added an additional layer of bureaucracy to the decision making. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Blades generally based organizational decision making on their positional hierarchy, with information flowing through the organizational chart and Daniel, as the chief revenue office,

approving even minor decisions. In the case of the furloughs, the hierarchy extended to include the human resources department of the NHL affiliate. That this department did not have daily interactions with the staff at the Blades might explain why the social hierarchy—based on people's social interactions and liking of each other—was not evoked during the decision making. Meanwhile, the Ice's downsizing decisions are made by collective conversations amongst individuals across the positional hierarchy, who all work every day with the people whose jobs they were deciding to keep or eliminate. Much like the less positionally hierarchically structured workplace described in Chapter 4, the Ice make their decisions based on the input of a manager, director, vice president, and president. In this mode of decision making, when it came to making decisions between individuals in the same positions—such as in ticket sales—consideration turned to the subjective and gendered performance and social hierarchies.

An ongoing debate in the gendered organization literature questions whether bureaucracy is helpful or hurtful for gender equity in organizations. Feminist scholars have long theorized bureaucracy as a system that asserts men's domination (see Ferguson, 1984). More recent research has drawn conflicting conclusions about whether bureaucracy helps or hinders women in organizations. Smith-Doerr (2004) argued that the hierarchies and rules of bureaucracies can obscure gender bias (see also Whittington & Smith-Doerr, 2008), while other research has found that bureaucratic formalization and rules can correct for discrimination during hiring and promotion (Padavic & Reskin, 2002; Reskin & McBrier, 2000). Mickey (2019) found that the bureaucratization of an organization lessens women's visibility needed for success, pushing them into less visible roles with limited mobility and increasing their risk of being let go during downsizing. In

the case of the two organizations under examination in the present study, however, the bureaucratic structure at the Blades seems to add additional protection of women's jobs by preventing decisions from being made on gendered performance and social hierarchies.

Another difference between the Ice and the Blades that may have affected the downsizing decisions was the respective gender diversity of the organizations prior to the downsizing. Barely a quarter of the staff at the Ice were women pre-downsizing (compared to just over 40% at the Blades). While this led to disproportionately gendered hierarchies at the Ice based solely on numbers, it also may have heightened the salience of gender differences in the organization (Correll, 2001). In addition, it may have contributed to the gendered performance hierarchy at the Ice compared to the Blades, given that women are evaluated more fairly and receive more credit for their efforts in gender-balanced teams compared to teams in which they are the minority (Heilman & Haynes, 2005; Williams et al., 2012). Further, that the downsizing decision makers at the Ice were primarily three men—compared to the women who work in the human resources department of the Blades' NHL affiliate—may have led to more gendered evaluations. A meta-analysis of gender biases in performance evaluations found significant pro-male bias when the evaluators were all men (Bowen et al., 2000).

Conclusion

Prior research had shown that managerial diversity decreases during downsizing, that women are disadvantaged when downsizing decisions are made on the basis of positional seniority and tenure, and that women working both in feminized jobs as well as in job functions dominated by men can be more susceptible to downsizing (Kalev, 2014;

Mickey, 2019). In this chapter, managers' explanations of downsizing decisions at the Ice and Blades show that women's placement in multiple, gendered organizational hierarchies leaves their jobs vulnerable during layoffs and furloughs. Reskin (2000) called organizations "hothouses that nurture power and status differences" (p. 323). These differences are organized into hierarchies based on position, department, tenure, and social relationships, all of which interact with gender in ways that can disadvantage women. The existence of multiple gendered hierarchies makes women's career success more challenging, as even women whose may have been protected by their place in some hierarchies—such as holding a leadership position, having longer tenure, or working in a highly valued department—can find their jobs at risk if downsizing decisions are based on other hierarchies in which their status is less secure.

The findings of this chapter continue the debate on whether bureaucratic forms of organizations help (Padavic & Reskin, 2002; Reskin & McBrier, 2000) or hinder (Mickey, 2019; Smith-Doerr, 2004; Whittington & Smith-Doerr, 2008) women at work. I find that the additional bureaucracy at the Blades, where decision making is formalized throughout the positional hierarchy and the decisions on downsizing are made by a distant human resources department, offers better protection of women's jobs. In contrast, the Ice's decisions are made through the debate of primarily three men in the office, who turn to gendered performance and social hierarchies when deciding between people in the same positions in the organization. This leads to decisions being made based on personal sentiments (Martin, 2001), advantaging the men who had formed close relationships with the decision makers.

While numerous previous studies of organizations, including in sport, have demonstrated that women are disadvantaged during hiring and promotion, this chapter demonstrates ways that women are also disadvantaged during downsizing. For example, prior work suggests that promotion processes and leadership team composition, among other areas, are likely to be affected by status hierarchies in organizations, including ascribed rather than achieved status (Ravlin & Thomas, 2005). As can be seen in this chapter, so too are downsizing processes. Other work has shown that workers are hired on the basis of 'cultural fit' (Rivera, 2012). The present study demonstrates that people are also let go on the basis of perceived fit and likeability, and that basing decisions on such a social hierarchy perpetuates gender inequalities, as gendered practices in the organizations value men and masculinities greater than women and femininities.

Clearly, these multiple organizational hierarchies contribute to the gendered nature of organizations. The link between gender hierarchies and other "systems of difference" reinforces existing gender inequities (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004, p. 522). Hierarchies represent such an obstacle to the realization of gender neutral organizations that Acker (1990) suggested such an accomplishment would require the abolishment of hierarchy. However, that suggestion pointed to the elimination of positional hierarchies, and some research on flatter and other flexible organizational forms has found the persistence of gender inequities (Brumley, 2014; Padavic & Reskin, 2002; Reskin & McBrier, 2000; Williams et al., 2012). The need is not just to break down one hierarchy, but to recognize that multiple hierarchies exist which can (re)produce gender status and power disparities throughout organizations.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

In this dissertation, I set out to examine how gendered structures, practices, and discourse, as well as the ways that people 'do gender,' (re)produce gender inequities in the administrative offices of men's professional sport organizations. As Ridgeway and Correll (2004) wrote, "gender acts as a fundamental principle for organizing social relations in virtually all spheres of social life" (p. 521). In organizations, gender is embedded into interactions, structures, and culture, and may become salient in any of these areas (Acker, 1990; 1992; Britton, 2017; Ridgeway, 2011). Findings from this study demonstrate ways that the organizational structures of the Ice and the Blades are gendered, with men more likely to hold leadership roles as well as positions in departments of greater organizational value, such as sales. Organizational discourse reveals how masculinities are valued and characterize the ideal worker. Additionally, social practices such as dress codes and workplace rituals create further divisions between men and women in the workplace. Such structures and practices, in turn, influence staffing decisions: when the organizations downsized their staffs following the COVID-19 pandemic, women were disproportionately impacted by layoffs and furloughs due to multiple, gendered organizational hierarchies. This dissertation furthers understandings of why women are underrepresented in sport organizations, through demonstrating how everyday work practices can advantage men and masculinities and disadvantage women and femininities.

This project is the first known study of gendered organizations taking place in the context of men's professional sport organizations. By looking somewhere new, I aimed to

uncover new knowledge about these phenomena in the sport industry. Within the sport management literature, only a limited number of studies had previously taken the gendered organization approach to studying gender and sport organizations, and, as discussed previously in this dissertation, such studies have been situated in the context of national governing boards (NGBs), college athletics, and local sport organizations, which are distinctly different organizations than men's professional sports.

In addition, prior sport management literature on 'doing gender' (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; 2012), besides also being situated with an NGB setting, falls short in its actual analysis of gender practices by equating the meanings people give to, and the sense people make of, gender in sport organizations to the social interactions of 'doing gender.' This research fills that gap by providing an account of how gender is 'done' in two professional sport organizations, through its examination of workplace rituals in Chapter 6. It also contributes to the broader field of gendered organization theory by examining potentially extreme cases of gendered practices and processes. The use of such extreme cases has been suggested as beneficial for theory building, as they provide a richness of data beyond what can be found in a more typical setting (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Men's sport, with its hyper-masculine culture (Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013), presented the opportunity for such extreme conditions to be analyzed.

Methodologically, few studies have employed field observations in the study of sport administration—and none are known to have done so in the context of a professional sport organization. Quantitative, post-positivist research dominates amongst published sport management research, despite calls for more work from a critical perspective (Frisby, 2005; Singer et al., 2019). And qualitative work in sport management

predominantly consists of interviews, focus groups, and case studies (Shaw & Hoeber, 2016). Reasons for the limited use of ethnography in research published in top-ranked sport management journals includes limited doctoral training in the method and lengthier time requirements compared to other methods (Delia, 2019). However, this dissertation demonstrates the value in overcoming those hurdles to pursue ethnographic research. Using an ethnographic research design allowed me to submerge myself in the setting, observing and experiencing the everyday nature of the two organizations (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998; Singh & Dickson, 2002). The combination of more extensive field observations with interviews and document and artifact analysis provides a richness of data not previously available in studies of gendered sport organizations. My findings demonstrate the value of 'being there:' had I not been present during, for example, the planking challenge or the golf putting competition analyzed in Chapter 6, I may never have considered pursuing an analysis of workplace rituals. Through my participant observation, I discovered new lines of inquiry on which I could focus my future observations and interviews.

In the following, I discuss how this dissertation makes contributions in the areas of gendered structures, gendered practices, and gendered downsizings. I then discuss implications and recommendations for practitioners and conclude by offering directions for future research.

Gendered Structures

An examination of the Ice and Blades' administrative offices revealed that their organizational structures contain divisions along gender lines (Acker, 1990), as detailed in Chapter 4. These gendered divisions extend beyond just the positional hierarchy in

sport organizations (e.g., Hall et al., 1989; Yiamouyiannis & Osborne, 2012), but include departmental divisions, job duties, and even spatial arrangements. Specifically, these divisions form within job titles, roles, and duties. Men hold all executive-level positions at both organizations, with women holding the assistant-level positions. While the middle levels of the positional hierarchy are closer to gender-balanced at the Blades, at the Ice, only one woman holds a position of manager or above. In addition, workers are segregated by gender into certain job roles, with men holding almost all of the positions in ticket sales, the largest department at both organizations. Job duties also vary by gender, particularly within the corporate and ticket sales departments, where women are more likely to be assigned service work while men focus exclusively on sales (Lane & Crane, 2002). At the Ice, regardless of formal position, women from the director of finance and human resources to the administrative assistant take on both office housekeeping work as well as other uncredited work outside their formal job descriptions. Further, spatial divisions by gender are evident, particularly at the Blades, where all but one woman are clustered into one half of the office due the segregation of women and men into different departments (Spain, 1992; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2015). Such spatial divisions affect social relationships in the organization: as discussed in Chapter 6, Gina, the Blades' marketing director, described the frustrations of Ted, a corporate service coordinator, with having to work surrounded by women, who 'did gender' in a way that he perceived as annoying, with their gossip, chatting, and complaining.

Chapter 7 further delved into these structural gender divisions, identifying multiple gendered hierarchies within the organizations, which together determine

organizational status (Ravlin & Thomas, 2005). In addition to the positional hierarchy, hierarchies based on department, performance, and social relationships are gendered in ways that advantage men and masculinities and disadvantage women and femininities. The departmental hierarchy reveals that not only is ticket sales the largest and most gender-imbalanced department, but it is the most highly valued department at the Ice and the Blades. Discourses of masculinity characterize ticket sales, portraying the ideal worker as an athlete possessing strength and discipline. Feminized departments, such as marketing and community relations, are deprioritized (Mickey, 2019), even at times when they become a focus of the work done at the organizations. The performance hierarchy disadvantages women when subjective evaluations lead to women being judged more harshly, such as by finding alternative explanations for women's past success and judging women based on past performance and men based on perceived potential (Heilman, 2001). The social hierarchy, meanwhile, demonstrates how social relationships—which as discussed in Chapter 6, are built between men around shared interest and participation in sports, golf, and other physical activities (Collinson & Hearn, 2001; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2005; Mickey, 2018)—determine employees' status in the organization. The findings underscore the importance of recognizing that the standard organizational chart conception of hierarchy insufficiently explains status in organizations—and that such hierarchies, when gendered, can influence organizational decision making in ways that (re)produce gender disparities, such as they did when the Ice and Blades downsized their staffs.

Gendered Practices

In Chapter 5, I showed how organizational dress codes, through both formal policies and informal communication, are socially constructed in ways that conflate "professional" with "masculine." Dress not only creates gender divisions by marking men and women as different (Shaw, 2006), but it does so in a way that disadvantages women. At the Ice and Blades, men find dress codes easy to navigate, as "professional" dress was designed with men in mind (Connell, 1987; Dent & Whitehead, 2002; Haynes, 2012). Not only do they find the prescribed clothing—golf attire for business casual work and business suits for game nights—comfortable, but they also feel empowered by it, describing putting on a suit as putting them in the right mindset to work (Dellinger, 2002). Women, meanwhile, find dress codes difficult to manage as they must find clothing that is "professional" yet feminine. Often, women find such dress clothes and shoes uncomfortable for their jobs, which require them to work in cold buildings, stand on their feet for long periods, complete physical labor, and walk on the ice. When they make missteps in their clothing choices, this reflects on evaluations of their professionalism and standing in the workplace (Britton, 2017)—so much so that for one woman, complaints about the way she dressed were cited in the decision to lay her off during the course of this study. Further, socially constructed ideas about the ways that women should dress at work represent a policing of women's bodies and sexuality at work (Acker, 1990), as clothing deemed too revealing is inappropriate and unprofessional.

In Chapter 6, I demonstrated how workplace rituals that reward displays of masculinities privilege mostly men in the workplace, enabling them to build social capital

while marking women (and some men) as both different and less than. Performance incentives that involve displays of masculinities, such as the Ice's putting competition, may be particularly harmful for women, as they may be less rewarding and less motivating, thereby negatively affecting their job performance absent intrinsic motivation.

Meanwhile, my findings showed that workplace rituals that encourage performances of femininities operate much differently than those encouraging performance of masculinities. While women may build relationships with each other through such rituals—a desired outcome from women in workplaces dominated by men (Williams, 2018)—the ritual examined in Chapter 6, a meeting to discuss a reality television show, is met with derision from men in the office, including those at the highest level of the organization. Such findings demonstrate how performing femininities at work carries more risk and downsides than performing masculinities (van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). One woman is able to avoid association with these performances of femininities by not participating in the ritual and instead participating in a counter-meeting that forms to discuss sports. In doing so, she maintains her status in the office.

Chapter 6 also described how men use physical activity, sport participation, and talk of sports to build relationships with each other beyond the context of specific workplace rituals. As discussed, other research also similarly noted how sports are used by men and exclude women at work (e.g., Miller, 2004; Turco, 2010). However, what is interesting to note is that the women in this study have an interest in sports, as current and former participants, fans, and professionals who have chosen to work in the industry. Yet, they frequently distance themselves from activities and conversations related to sports

with their men colleagues, suggesting that they must 'do gender' by avoiding such performances of masculinities at work.

Gendered Downsizing

My findings demonstrate how women face challenges not only during hiring and promotions processes (e.g., Ravlin & Thomas, 2005; Rivera, 2012), but during downsizing as well. In Chapter 7, I uncovered how multiple gendered hierarchies leave women's jobs at risk of downsizing, extending explanations of how managerial diversity decreases when organizations downsize (Kalev, 2014; Mickey, 2019; Williams, 2018). When women hold fewer jobs in leadership positions or in highly valued, masculinized departments, they are more likely to have their jobs eliminated. A gendered performance hierarchy also hurts women during downsizing, as performance evaluations can be gendered. Just as women are promoted on the basis of past performance, requiring them to prove themselves before advancing, while men are promoted on the basis of manager's confidence in them (Ruderman et al., 1995), so too are women and men evaluated differently during downsizing. The social hierarchy leads to decisions being made on the basis of men's personal 'liking' of each other (Martin, 2001). As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, men and masculinities are valued more than women and femininities in these organizations, improving men's standing on the social hierarchy and putting women's jobs at risk when downsizing decisions are based on likeability and perceived fit.

While Kalev (2014) found that downsizing decisions based on tenure disadvantage women, in the case of the Ice and Blades this was not evident. One plausible explanation is that the organizations had little gender differences in tenure, due to both the young age of the organizations and the young age of many of their workers.

However, should the tenure hierarchy be gendered—as it might be in other organizations for reasons including social norms about family caretaking responsibilities (Hollister & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2001), women's jobs would be further at risk.

My findings also demonstrated that a more bureaucratic organizational structure may protect women during downsizing decisions, in line with other research that has found that bureaucracy can offer protection from discrimination (Padavic & Reskin, 2002; Reskin & McBrier, 2000). While other studies have found that women fare better in flatter and more flexible organizations (Mickey, 2019; Smith-Doerr, 2004; Whittington & Smith-Doerr, 2008), women at the Blades appeared to benefit from their organization's added bureaucracy, as a distant human resources department drives the downsizing decisions, avoiding choosing employees for furlough on the basis of subjective performance evaluations or a social hierarchy.

Practical Implications and Recommendations

An important aim of critical research is provoking change to the systems of power, domination, and inequality that we study (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Frisby, 2005). While making inequities visible through research is a needed step toward that change, as organizations cannot change that of which they are not aware (Dellinger, 2002), awareness itself is not change. With that aim in mind, I offer several recommendations for sport industry practitioners based on the findings of this dissertation.

First, when evaluating the gender diversity of sport organizations, managers should think beyond the positional organizational chart. Industry report cards provide feedback on overall organization diversity as well as by rank (e.g., Lapchick, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c), but fall short in understanding how individuals in certain roles may hold

more power or be more valued in the organization (Yiamouyiannis & Osborne, 2012). Managers should consider the gender breakdown by department and interrogate why certain departments are gender imbalanced. They should also examine both their hiring practices (e.g., ideal worker characteristics) and their workplace practices (e.g., motivational posters, employee bonding events, performance incentive activities) and pay attention to how these may benefit certain individuals in the organization. Managers can make changes by eliminating practices that privilege certain workers and by creating new practices that are more inclusive. In addition, managers should pay attention to the spatial organization of their workplaces. They should take note of what gender divisions exist and how may these be contributing to organizational hierarchies, as where people sit and who receives a private office can denote organizational power (Konar et al., 1982).

Second, sport managers should examine how their workplace policies such as dress codes, whether formally written or informally communicated, create gender divisions by (re)producing gender differences, applying different standards for men and women, or creating additional hurdles for people of certain genders. Both business professional dress and business casual dress have been constructed as white and masculine (Connell, 1987; Cunningham, 2009; Dent & Whitehead, 2002; Haynes, 2012) and women's equivalent dress may be ill suited for the jobs women in sport organizations are asked to perform. If providing organization-branded attire, managers should recognize that common choices like golf shirts may make dressing easier for the men for whom they were designed and be sure to offer appropriate alternatives for women as well. Sport managers should consider what aspects of these policies are actually

necessary to run a business and explore alternative policies, in consultation with their employees.

Third, managers should consider how recurring workplace rituals, such as those discussed in Chapter 6, reward performances of masculinities or femininities. Managers need to pay attention not only to who is participating in these activities, but also to how they participate in order to recognize how they might be creating exclusion or (re)producing gender differences. While many workers might seem to find an activity enjoyable, this does not mean that everyone is experiencing it in the same way. Managers should pay particular attention to performance incentives and how these may be incentivizing masculinities and thus disadvantaging women at work. To counter these disadvantages, workplace rituals should be varied so neither performances of masculinities nor femininities are privileged. Managers should especially take care that rituals involving displays of femininities, like the reality TV show meeting highlighted in Chapter 6, are encouraged and celebrated within organizations, as these performances of femininities tend to face scrutiny from men, including those with organizational power (van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). Likewise, managers should plan employee bonding events that appeal to a wide range of interests. Women may feel excluded or even unsafe in certain environments, such as bars and golf courses, that are often chosen for these types of events (Morgan & Martin, 2006), so such settings should be avoided.

Lastly, managers should be cognizant of how downsizing decisions impact gender diversity, just as hiring decisions do. Managers should note which organizational hierarchies they are basing downsizing decisions on, recognize how these hierarchies are gendered, and correct for such gendering in their decision making. Kalev (2014) noted

that awareness of potential gender bias seemed to trigger accountability in organizations making decisions based on performance evaluations, which reduced gender disparities compared to downsizing decisions that were made on the purportedly neutral basis of position or tenure. Additionally, managers should avoid making downsizing decisions on the basis of fit or likeability, as such decisions privilege men, particularly when the decisions are made by other men in the organization (Martin, 2001; Rivera, 2012). Using decision makers who have more distance from the employees, such as a human resources department instead of immediate supervisors, may minimize this aspect of gender bias during downsizing.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This dissertation presents a qualitative case study of two men's sport organizations. With the understanding that both gender and organizations are socially constructed phenomena and therefore context-specific, my findings are not generalizable to other settings, including other sport organizations, but are meant to develop and extend theory (Dellinger, 2004; Feagin et al., 1991). Specifically, my findings are limited by the context that both organizations were minor league hockey teams in the United States. Organizations in other sport contexts or other levels of sport (e.g., major league), in particular, require further examination. My findings were further limited by the (lack of) diversity of the organizations, particularly in regard to race. The vast majority of participants were white, excepting three individuals at the Ice (one Asian American and two Black participants).

While the focus on my inquiry was on the gendered nature of sport organizations, I recognize that organizations are also racialized, and the intersection of race and gender

disadvantages women of color even more so (Acker, 2006; Alfrey & Twine, 2017; Bhatt, 2013; Ray, 2019). An examination of racialized structures and practices would be particularly compelling, given that the organizations both manage hockey teams, a sport with a long history of racism and racial disparities. The sport of hockey is both masculine and white (Adams, 2006). During the 2020 season, more than 95% of players in the NHL, the highest level of professional hockey in North America, were white (Hooper, 2020). Media commentary of hockey athletes constructs "whiteness" as "goodness," while both media and league actors police the behaviors and appearances of Black players in the NHL (Lorenz & Murray, 2014; Poniatowski & Whiteside, 2012).

Just as men made up the majority of full-time administrative workers in these two organizations, so too did white people. The Blades, located in a suburban city with close to 65% white, non-Hispanic residents, had no people of color working among their full-time administrative staff. Perhaps more starkly, while nearly 85 percent of the staff at the Ice were white, less than a third of their city's population is white (not Hispanic or Latinx). Based on my observations, people of color made up a large percentage of the part-time, game-night staff working positions such as ticket takers, concessions workers, and housekeeping (positions that are staffed by the arena administration, not by the Ice). That the diversity of the city's population is better represented in the part-time, lower-wage positions may be indicative of how organizational inequality regimes lead to division based on race, gender, and class, and how racialized organizations legitimize unequal resource distribution (Acker, 2006; Ray 2019). Further research might not only more closely examine race within the administrative offices of sport organizations, but also consider those working on the periphery of the organization, such as the venue staff.

Additionally, purposive sampling could be used to further examine the work experiences of people of color, particularly women, in sport administrative offices where the employees are overwhelmingly white.

Additionally, this dissertation demonstrates the need for further research into the gendered nature of ticket sales departments in sport organizations. As my findings revealed, not only do few women work in these departments, but they are often segregated into service-oriented roles. Organizational discourse associates masculinities including strength and athleticism with the ideal ticket sales worker, while sales performance incentives such as the Ice's golf putting competition further reward performances of masculinities. In addition, my findings showed how even in a department like ticket sales that has objective performance data available (i.e., sales numbers), managers evaluate employees based on subjective, gendered standards. Given that a large percentage of entry-level job openings in the sport industry are for inside sales roles like those in the Ice and Blades' ticket sales departments (Pierce et al., 2012)—and that sport management students are frequently told that sales is the way to "break into sports" (Washo, 2004)—understanding the gendered nature of these jobs is critical. Previous research into the hiring practices for ticket sales representatives in major league sports did not examine such practices from a gendered organization theory lens, but included several findings that could potentially disadvantage women, including reliance on network referrals and judgments based on appearance during interviews (Popp et al., 2019). Likewise, research into sport management students' perceptions of ticket sales as a career path has yet to explore gender differences. While one study demonstrated that many students—both men and women—are often resistant to these

jobs, the results did not examine gender differences, though some concerns of participants, such as one woman's worry that she would be too sensitive, a stereotypically feminine trait, suggest students' perceptions might be shaped by gendered norms (Sattler & Warren, 2016).

Even as sales as a profession has become more 'feminized' and focused on relationship building, the segregation of women into service-oriented positions and men into sales-oriented positions disadvantages women's career advancement (Lane & Crane, 2002). Also, while my findings focused on the relationships between employees, prior work has indicated that women selling tickets in men's professional sport organizations face discrimination from fans (Hindman & Walker; 2020). As seen in Chapters 5 and 7, at the Ice, Mason's negative evaluations of Finley are based in part on complaints the organization received from fans. Further research is needed to explore these dynamics and how they contribute to the performance evaluations and work experiences of women working in ticket sales.

This dissertation, through its ethnographic inquiry of two men's professional sport organizations, has indeed uncovered the gendered sport workplace. My findings on the gendered structures and practices of these two organizations provide insight into why gender disparities in sport administration management persist (e.g., Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Lapchick, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c). Yet they cannot offer a full explanation of the gender inequities in the sport industry. Further work taking a gendered organization theory lens is needed to explore additional aspects of these organizations.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE

Before interview begins:

- Explain purpose of research to participant
- Explain how information will be used
- Explain participants' rights
- Reaffirm consent for audio recording

Interview Topics Include:

I. <u>Work Experiences</u>

Sample questions:

- What's a typical workday like for you?
- What do you like/dislike about working here?
- Do you feel your perspectives are valued or solicited?

II. <u>Career Progression</u>

Sample questions:

- How did you end up working here?
- What are your career goals?

III. <u>Workplace Relationships</u>

Sample questions:

- Who do you interact with most often at work?
- How would you describe your relationship with your coworkers?
- How do you maintain relationships with your coworkers?
- Do you socialize with any coworkers outside of work?

IV. <u>Management/Supervision</u>

Sample questions:

1. Do you get along with your manager?
2. How do people get promoted here?
3. Whose perspectives do you think are most valued?

At conclusion of interview:

- Ask if they have anything else they would like to add
- Remind them of possible follow-up for data confirmation
- Thank them for participation

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